



Trustees Recruitment Pack

Summer 2026

Introduction

Are you passionate about making a difference in your community? Do you have a desire to support children and families and work for the benefit of our communities as well?

We are looking to appoint trustees from a diverse background with a broad range of skills and experiences to join our hard working and committed board.

As a trustee you will play a key role in the governance of our organisation and help deliver our business plan.

Aspire Foundation is committed to equality and diversity and welcomes applications from all members of our community.

We are particularly keen to recruit trustees with experience in the following areas;

- Finance
- Human Resources (including well-being)
- Securing Grant Funding
- Data and Monitoring
- IT

If you would like any further information or are unsure if you qualify for one of the roles, please contact Mel Hill, Organisation Strategic Lead at melanie.hill@aspirefoundation.org.uk to arrange an informal discussion with one of our existing trustees.

Welcome from Chair of Trustees

Thank you for your interest in joining the board of trustees of Aspire Foundation at what is an exciting time for us as we seek to expand and diversify our services as well as seeking to move beyond our current locations in Cheltenham and Tewkesbury.

I hope that you find this information pack useful and that you will consider joining us as a trustee.

Who are we?

Aspire Foundation, previously known as Gardners Lane and Oakwood Federation, is a registered charity (1155305) founded to support children and families 'aspire and achieve'

We have over 20 years' experience of delivering successful, high-quality early intervention services and educational programmes to families with young children. These include family support services, children's centres and early year's settings.

We aim for children and families to achieve their potential together through the provision of support, information, learning and play opportunities.

Aspire Foundation is governed by a highly skilled and experienced board of trustees from a range of disciplines. The board is supported by a senior management team.

Inspiring children and supporting families is our core business. It is important to us that our staff have the qualities and skills necessary to deliver high quality services, able to reflect, communicate, empathise and challenge as needed.

We invite our teams to put forward fresh ideas whenever opportunities arise.

Our history

- **1998** Gardners Lane Primary School was established and took over the running of Elmfield Family Centre, previously a social services provision.
- **2000** Gardners Lane Family Centre is awarded Early Excellence status by DFE.
- **2005** Gardners Lane Early Excellence Centre is designated as a phase 1 Children Centre, part of the delivery arm of the local Sure Start programme.
- **2009** Oakwood School is built and Gardners Lane and Oakwood Federation (GLOW) is formed. Oakwood Children's Centre joins the Federation.
- **2013** GLOW is awarded a contract to run the 7 Cheltenham Locality Children's Centres
- **2016** Gardners Lane and Oakwood Federation is awarded the contract to run a Targeted Family Support Service across Cheltenham and Tewkesbury districts including 5 Children and Family Centres and 5 registered Early Years settings.
- **2021** Gardners Lane and Oakwood Federation becomes Aspire Foundation.
- **2024** Aspire Foundation awarded the contract to run the Children and Family Centre contract in Cheltenham and Tewkesbury, which includes 5 children and Family Centres and a requirement to develop community capacity in these areas

The board of Trustees

The role of the board of trustees is to provide sound governance and leadership and to set the strategic direction of the organisation, in accordance with its charitable objectives and as required by law.

Our current board of trustees are;

Julie Hunt (Chair of Trustees)

I have spent more than 30 years in education, firstly as a primary school teacher and then Headteacher of 2 Infant schools.

Since leaving Headship, I have taught at the University of Gloucestershire on the Early Years and Initial Teacher Training degree courses, I currently work part-time with trainee teachers on 'teaching practice' in schools in order to provide advice and support.

I am passionate about training the next generation of practitioners and teachers so that all children receive the very best care and education to support their holistic development.

In my spare time I enjoy swimming, cooking for friends and family, reading and travelling.

Lesley Molnar-Pleydell

I started my career in Child Protection as a Social Worker and witnessed first-hand the impact of poverty, deprivation and marginalisation amongst my clients. During this time my passion to bring change to the vulnerable grew and it has informed my career to date.

In my current role I work with male and female severe offenders.

My previous role was Head of Development for Ofsted Registered care centres for children with complex and additional needs, mainly focussing on Autism.

In my spare time I'm a voracious reader, part-time student, enthusiastic cook and a lover of nature. I take long walks with my rescue dog from Romania and when possible, I enjoy travelling.

Claire Price

I have spent all my working life in the field of education. For 20 years I was deputy head of a large village Junior school. Following, retirement from full time teaching I spent the last ten years of my teaching career as a LA Education Officer responsible for advising parents who chose to educate their children at home.

I continue to maintain my passion and interest in education as a school governor of Gardners Lane and Oakwood Federation of schools and one of the founding Trustees of the organisation. I firmly believe that children are our most valuable asset and deserve the best care, education and opportunities that we are able to provide.

Other activities include being a member of Cheltenham Cancer Research UK which involves organising and partaking in fundraising activities; being a trustee of a small local Housing Association which provides affordable housing for retired people and assisting at a local toddler's group. I am also a Welfare (safeguarding) officer for a local village cricket team.

In my spare time I like to spend time with family and friends, enjoy walking, gardening, cooking (a Mary Berry addict) and relaxing with a good TV programme or book.

Dr Nia Thomas (Vice Chair of Trustees)

I'm Nia and I have a background of supporting children and families in poverty across the NHS, local government, civil service and now the charitable sector in Wales and England. I was also a Trustee of a charity, focused on children in care, on the edge of care and care leavers before moving to Cheltenham.

I've led the delivery of childcare, play, parenting, family support, early language, health visiting, family information services, integrated children's centres and more. I've also been privileged to shape policy, particularly about co-producing services alongside parents.

In my spare time, I host a leadership podcast and write a weekly blog about self-awareness in leadership. I recently moved house, to be near to my husband's business and am looking forward to honing my scooter riding skills!

Oliver Tuck

Since training to be a teacher I have had the privilege in working in Primary Schools in Gloucester, Newent and now Cheltenham. I have undertaken a variety of Senior Leadership Roles - I was Head of School at Finlay Community School, Executive Deputy Head and Acting Executive Head at the GPP Federation and am now Headteacher at Gardners Lane Primary School.

Although I have only been at Gardners Lane Primary since September 2024 I have loved every moment. It is a pleasure to work at the heart of our diverse community, and I value the role of school in supporting child development both personally and academically. It is a privilege to work with a dedicated staff team who continually go above and beyond for the children and families at our school. I am driven by the desire to ensure we are an inclusive school and that any child, regardless of need or background, should feel like they belong, they can aspire and achieve.

I am a proud husband and father to two boys aged 7 and 10. I am kept busy by our never-ending DIY project of a home, our chickens and coaching my son's football team.

Daniel Tarver

I'm Dan, and I bring 16 years of experience in law and finance to my role as a Trustee. As the founder of Trioak Capital, I specialise in advising financial startups on business development and capital raising skills. I am now dedicated to ensuring Aspire Foundation remains a sustainable and impactful force for families.

Growing up as a dairy farmer's son in Worcestershire, I saw hard work and resilience up close. Now living in Cheltenham with my wife, a local teacher, and our two sons, I believe every child deserves a strong start, and I am proud to support Aspire's mission to remove barriers for families in our community.

Sara Bennion

My name is Sara, and I am currently the Headteacher of a primary school in Tewkesbury. I have been teaching for over 20 years and began my career in Early Years, an area I continue to find both inspiring and deeply rewarding. Supporting young children as they grow and develop has always been a privilege.

My school sits at the heart of a diverse and vibrant community, where building strong relationships with families is central to our success. I hope to bring this local insight and understanding of our community to my work as a Trustee. I am looking forward to supporting Aspire in continuing to deliver high-quality educational opportunities and in making a positive difference for all children and families it serves.

How our board works

Full board - meets four times to six per year and minimum attendance is 50% over two years.

Sub-Committees / Working groups – meet up to four time per year as required or when working groups are established.

Duration of term - Three years with an option to stay on the board for a further three years.

Board Structure – We are aiming for a board of seven to ten trustees, led by a Chair and Vice Chair, with these positions elected every year.

Remuneration – Reasonable out of pocket expenses associated with running the organisation will be paid.

Conflict of Interest – Will be managed in accordance with our policies and procedures to avoid any conflict either professional or personally.

Why become a trustee?

- Be involved in setting the future direction of an organisation that is committed to support the lives of children and families and helping them to “aspire and achieve”
- Develop new skills and experiences in a supportive environment and engage with committed staff members who strive to make a difference in the lives of the children and families we work with.
- Build a strong professional network of like-minded people, including business, education, social care, stakeholders and local authorities.
- Enhance your own personal and professional credibility by demonstrating your leadership in the community support and social care sector.

If you would like to find out more about Aspire Foundation, please visit our website www.aspirefoundation.org.uk

If you are interested in joining the board of Aspire Foundation, please complete the Trustee application form expressing your interest in the role as well as a CV demonstrating your relevant experience to melanie.hil@aspirefoundation.org.uk

Trustee Person Specification		
Date person specification prepared/updated: June 2026		
ATTRIBUTES	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE
Sector Experience Experience or interest in one of these sectors is desirable.		• Children & Families • Community Engagement • Grant Funding • Education • Health and Well Being
Technical Skills Experience or knowledge of at least one of these technical skills is essential.	• Business and Commercial experience • Financial management • Marketing & Branding • Fundraising • Legal • Innovation and enterprise • Securing new contracts	
Interpersonal / Skills	• Excellent communication skills • Excellent networking skills • Ability to work as member of a team	

Governance	• Strategic vision • Committed to furthering the aims and objectives of Aspire Foundation • Sound judgement and confidence to speak out. • Willing to accept legal responsibilities associated with running the affairs of a charity as set out by the charity commission. • Prepared to commit the necessary time to fulfil the duties of a trustee • Commitment to equality and diversity	
Special conditions	• To attend up to six Board meetings as agreed during academic year plus other ad-hoc meetings as necessary	