



# **Early Years Alliance**

## Trustee recruitment pack

# Help shape our future

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The Early Years Alliance is currently looking for trustees to serve from 1 March 2026 to 28 February 2029 to help drive the vision, mission and values of our charity.

This recruitment pack is intended to give you a little more information about the Early Years Alliance as an organisation, the role of trustee and what it entails, and what to do if you want to put yourself forward.

If you have any questions not answered in this pack, please free feel to contact Alliance's Membership Services team on 020 7697 2595 and they will be happy to help.





# Who we are

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The Early Years Alliance is the largest and most representative early years membership organisation in England, representing nurseries, pre-schools, childminding professionals, baby and toddler groups and other early years groups and individuals.

We represent 14,000 members across the country and support the delivery of care and education to more than 800,000 families every year. We are very proud to actively campaign on behalf of our members and the wider sector to influence and improve early years policy and practice.

We offer Alliance members high-quality information and advice, produce specialist publications, run acclaimed training courses and deliver professional development and quality improvement support.

As a registered educational charity, we also deliver high-quality affordable education, care and family support to children and their families in areas of deprivation throughout the country.

We are committed to learning through play, parental involvement and creating inclusive, nurturing environments for children in our care.

Our vision is a society where every child enjoys the opportunity to learn through play. We believe families should be at the centre of policymaking and empowered to become fully involved with their child's learning and development.

To help achieve this, we support early years providers to deliver high-quality, affordable and sustainable care and education to families, and to ensure that all children, regardless of background, are given the best possible start in life.

# Becoming a trustee

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## What is a trustee?

Trustees are volunteers who are responsible for a charity's management and administration. They make sure that a charity is carrying out the purposes it was set up to carry out, oversee its finances and ensure that there are effective policies, procedures and risk management processes in place. They are also responsible for ensuring that the charity complies with its governing document, which outlines the purpose of the organisation and how it is governed, and any other legal responsibilities.

It's important to note that the role of a Board of Trustees is strategic, rather than operational: this just means that as a trustee, you will focus on what the Alliance is looking to achieve, rather than on the specifics of how the organisation achieves it. While the Board is legally responsible for the actions of the charity, the trustees delegate the operation of the charity to the chief executive, who is responsible for managing the Alliance's affairs through the charity's line management.

More information on the powers and responsibilities of the Board of Trustees can be found in the Alliance's [Articles of Association](#) (Articles 21 and 26).



## Why join the Alliance's Board of Trustees?

Here at the Early Years Alliance, we aren't afraid to be ambitious. We want to transform the early years landscape in England and build a sector and society that recognises the importance of a child's earliest years, and ensures that all children and families can access the quality support, care and education they both need and deserve.

If you are already an active member of the Alliance and want to play a central role in shaping our strategy over the next three years, then there is no better way to do so than by joining our Board of Trustees



### **Laura Perfetti**

Alliance trustee for three years

I initially encountered the Alliance as a nursery worker. When I first moved to the UK 13 years ago, I worked in various nurseries, and through these nurseries I completed CPD courses with the Alliance.

Five years ago, I started managing a Montessori nursery in Crouch End, London, which was a member of the Alliance with our insurance provided through them. This allowed me to get to know the Alliance more fully.

Having interacted with the Alliance throughout the years, when I initially got an email regarding trustee nominations, I was interested. I liked the fact the Alliance was, and continues to be, very involved with the rights of children and families, especially in areas of deprivation. I could see the Alliance was genuinely committed to helping children and families thrive. The thought of having an impact and making a change for children who need it most is ultimately what most appealed to me about being a trustee for the Alliance.

I've never been a trustee before, so it was certainly a steep learning curve in

some respects – I had never had to deal with business accounts before! However, it was so worthwhile and as someone who loves learning, I found the process stimulating and exciting. It's really motivating to participate in board meetings with people who are equally as passionate as me about ensuring each child has the best possible start in life.

Given that I have never been good with numbers, I was surprised to find that I really enjoy the financial aspect of being a trustee. I value those discussions where we have to find the balance between fiscal responsibility and idealism. Doing this with a group that really believes in what it is doing has been both challenging and incredibly interesting.

At the moment, it's hard to deny the early years has been going through a difficult time but I believe that so long as the Alliance continues to build on its important work and we, as a sector, invest in our partnerships with families, we can become a driving force for change all together.



## **What kind of commitment are trustees expected to give?**

If you are elected as an Alliance trustee, you would serve for three years (from 1 March 2026 to 28 February 2029), though you can actually serve for up to twelve successive years in total if you choose to stand for re-election and are successful.

Within this three-year period, you would be asked to attend at least four board of trustee meetings each year, which would be held either online or at a venue in London. In addition, the board may also hold ad-hoc single agenda item meetings up to three times a year.

Outside of this, the level of commitment is likely to be as you would expect for the role: preparation time before meetings to read and absorb agendas and relevant papers, and responding to the occasional consultation or query by phone or email where a quick response is needed.

You may also be asked to serve on working groups or to attend member events, though this is not obligatory – and if you are appointed to one of the trustee officer roles, such as chair or vice-chair, you would be expected to give more time.

You will also be provided with a training and induction programme to ease you into your new role, which take place across three days.

## **How does the election process work?**

There are twelve trustee vacancies in total in the upcoming elections. If we receive more than twelve nominations, we will hold a ballot to allow Alliance members to choose who is appointed to these important roles.



## What eligibility criteria do trustees have to meet?

To be elected to be elected to the Alliance Board of Trustees, you need to be:

- 18 years old or older
- a full individual member of the Alliance; OR
- the nominee of an organisation holding a full organisational membership of the Alliance

Your membership will need to have been in place for at least 12 months at the time of signing the nomination papers.

Paid employees of the Alliance are not eligible to be elected as trustees.



### **Lorna Pendred**

Vice Chair

I first got involved with the Early Years Alliance when I started volunteering with a local playgroup at just 16 and on study leave for my exams. It was a small group run in the local sea scouts building, and I remember we had young children excited

to be able to play outdoors in one of the small rowing boats!

Later, when my eldest daughter started pre-school, I volunteered for her playgroup and was invited along to the Grimsby Branch AGM. My pre-school colleagues kindly suggested I might like to get more involved. I attended a few meetings and quickly became the chairperson, holding meetings in my home whilst my husband was also the Branch Training Chair. A nomination to join the County Committee really broadened my perspective and understanding of how charitable organisations operate. I was drawn in to campaign for more support for the early years and playgroup movement! While I was County Chair, I had the opportunity to attend the National



Council and was well and truly hooked with the Alliance, an organisation which stood for everything I believed in to support children in the early years. I admit, the travel, buzz of politics and camaraderie were also reasons for me to join and be a part of something bigger at a time when I had a young family and needed some time for self-development and to learn about myself – building skills to support me with my own qualifications and career.

I enjoy being part of a professional and empathetic organisation who consistently champion the agenda for early years while being empowering and reacting to the dynamics of ever challenging policy developments. Being an Alliance trustee has enabled me to be part of a successful and well-respected charity.

I would love to see government policy putting young children and their families at the heart of their decisions, to truly engage and support families to provide the best opportunities and outcomes for their children. I recognise this is ambitious, but it is at the heart of the decisions we make when we are entrusted to become Early Years Alliance trustees.

There are some restrictions on who can legally act as a charity trustee. This means that if any of the following apply, an individual would not be able to be elected to the Alliance's Board:

- If they have been convicted at any time of any offence involving deception or dishonesty, unless the conviction is legally regarded as spent
- If they are a 'undischarged bankrupt' i.e. have a bankruptcy that is still in progress
- If they have at any time been removed by the Charity Commission or by the court in England, Wales or Scotland from being a trustee because of misconduct
- If they are disqualified from being a company director
- If they have failed to make payments under county court administration orders

## What next?

Still keen to join our Board of Trustees? Fantastic! To put yourself forward, simply tell us why you would like to join the Alliance Board via the nomination form, which is available [here](#).

You will need to sign your form and have it seconded by another Alliance member who also meets the eligibility criteria outlined on the previous page. We also ask all nominees to fill out a HMRC fit and proper persons test form, available [here](#), just to confirm your suitability to sit on the Board of Trustees.

Once you have completed both forms, you can submit them by email to [trustee.elections@eyalliance.org.uk](mailto:trustee.elections@eyalliance.org.uk). The deadline for completed forms is 24 October 2025.



### **Sarah Presswood**

Chair of the Alliance Board of Trustees

The first time I got involved with the Alliance, I was living in Hong Kong with two small children. At that time, it was known as the Pre-school Playgroup Association. I joined a mother and toddler group that ended up being such a lifeline.

Many years later, when I was back in the UK, I was working in a day nursery and I ended up being catapulted into a manager role in quite an unexpected way. I had no idea about policies and procedures; it was a really overwhelming time. Thankfully, the Alliance – then the Pre-school Learning Alliance – advisor gave me the support to get the nursery up and running, and built my confidence. The strong ethos of support throughout the Alliance made me want to get more involved and, eventually, become a trustee.

The most rewarding part of being an Alliance trustee is belonging to an organisation that sticks to its principles and is genuinely there for children and educators. I love hearing about the organisation's successes and seeing what a difference the Alliance makes to members, and children who attend the settings and their families. Even when the going gets tough, the Alliance will continue to fight for the early years. The work the Alliance does really speaks to me and my values.

The most unexpected reward of being a trustee is feeling like I am part of the bigger picture for the early years. It's very affirming to be involved in discussions where we're making decisions and deciding on strategy that, in an ideal world, would influence policy at a high level. It's given me a new appreciation for how hard the organisation works behind the scenes to lobby and make change happen. Our CEO Neil interacts so well with people on every level – which makes it all the more fun to have a good-natured joke with him!

In the future, I would love for everyone in the sector to be recognised valued and rewarded for vital role they have in forming citizens of the future. Our society is built on the foundations formed in the early years.

I have gained so much from being an Alliance trustee. I've learned about myself, and about how big organisations operate. I would truly recommend it for anyone who's interested in joining. We need people to bring diverse experiences of the early years to the Alliance. No one need feel they can't be a trustee.



A young child is standing in a field of tall grass, looking down at a camera they are holding. The child is wearing a grey cap with brown bunny ears, a black long-sleeved shirt, and black pants. A blue and white backpack is on their back, and a small orange tag with a smiley face and the word 'TRAN' is attached to the bottom. The background is a soft-focus field of grass with a warm, golden light in the upper right corner.

**Thank you for your interest in joining our Board of Trustees.  
We can't wait to hear from you!**