



Candidate Information

Chair

Thera Trust

Applications close on Monday 28th January 2019 (12.00 noon)

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About Thera Trust

Thera Trust is a registered charity (No 1090163) and the parent of a charitable group of companies that support people with a learning disability with a diverse range of needs.

The Trust provides business and administrative support from its office in Grantham. This enables the companies to focus on delivering high quality support locally.

Many of the people that Thera supports have complex needs or have previously lived in institutional settings for a long time. Regardless of how complex a person's needs may be, we support everyone in a person-centred way so that they can live an ordinary life. As well as supporting people in their own homes and in the community, we offer a range of specialist support. This includes helping people to manage their own finances and finding the right place to live, and support for employment and training. People with a learning disability are employed to offer quality checks of the support we provide.

Thera's vision is that people with a learning disability can be leaders in society. To demonstrate our commitment to fulfilling this vision, 40% of our paid directors have lived experience of learning disability. As part of their role, they ensure that Thera remains focused on providing high quality support that meets people's needs.

Our story

Thera Trust started in 1998, supporting 5 people with a learning disability in Cambridgeshire. We wanted to show that people with a learning disability could be in control of their support. In 2003, Thera Trust was beginning to feel too big so the idea of a group of companies was born. These would be local companies small enough to keep Thera's vision at their heart, enabling people to lead and manage their own support. Since then, the Group has developed as follows:

- **Thera North** was Thera's first local company and started supporting people in 2005.

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- **Thera East Midlands** and **Thera East Anglia** started supporting people in January 2006.
- **Thera West** and **Thera (Scotland)** were set up in 2007.
- **The Quality Company** and **Dosh** were set up in 2007 to provide specific specialised services to people.
- These companies were followed by **Thera South West** in 2009 and **Thera East** in 2010.
- **Forward Housing** officially became a part of Thera Group in 2010.
- In 2014 **The Camden Society** joined the group and **Thera South Midlands** was set up.
- **Equal Futures** joined the group in 2015, providing a specialised service. **Aspire** also joined the group and Thera West then merged with Aspire
- **Ansar Projects** joined Thera in 2016.

The Thera Group of companies continues to be excited about day-to-day support to people with a learning disability and in offering innovative and new approaches, making sure people always have choice and control over their own support. From our beginnings supporting 5 people in Cambridgeshire we now provide a range of support across the UK for around 3,000 people with a learning disability and employ over 3,500 staff.

History of our name

When we were first starting, we thought very hard about what to call our organisation. We didn't want our new organisation to have a name that defined, by association, the people we were to support.

We were inspired by an old story about the island of Thera (Santorini) where the people lived wonderful lives. After the island of Thera was badly affected by an erupting volcano, the people worked hard to rebuild their lives. This inspired us to always try to help people with a learning disability to build great lives for

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themselves. The dolphin in our logo is based on a painting that was found on the island.

Our vision statement

Our Vision influences everything we do as an organisation. We make the Vision real through direct leadership by people with a learning disability at all levels; through our projects and locally-led companies; and through giving people real choice and control about how they live their lives.

- Thera will show that people with a learning disability can be leaders in society.
- Thera will be controlled by people with a learning disability.
- People supported by Thera can say how their Thera company is directed and managed.
- People with a learning disability will design the support they want from Thera.
- Thera will respect the rights and wishes of people at work, at home and in the community.
- People with a learning disability will check the quality of support from their Thera company.
- Thera Group will be led by a charity.

Further information about Thera Trust, including financial statements and social impact reports, can be found on the website www.thera.co.uk

The Appointment

Thera Trust's current Chair is standing down after some ten years' dedicated service and the Trustees of Thera Trust now wish to attract expressions of interest from possible successors.

This is a part-time, non-executive appointment, and the Chair will be a member of Thera Trust and a Charity Trustee. The appointment is currently unremunerated, but out-of-pocket expenses may be reimbursed.

The minimum time commitment is in the region of two days per month, plus two days for an annual Chair's forum, though additional time spent supporting Trust executives or visiting subsidiary activities will of course be welcomed.

Purpose

The Chair is accountable for the effective operation of the Board in line with Thera's culture and philosophy

Scope

- The Chair is to act in accordance with Charity and Company law, the Memorandum and Articles of Thera Trust and the Higgs report (and related documents)
- The Chair is to act, as determined, on behalf of the Board and, as required as its representative
- The Chair will work within a framework where there is a flat executive team structure and all executive directors who are also charitable trustees and board members, being accountable to the Board

Role

Members:

- Ensure effective communication amongst the members of all Thera companies
- Ensure effective communication between members of Thera Trust and its Board

The Appointment

The Board:

- Ensure that a clear structure is in place for the effective operation of the Board and its committees
- Ensure that the Board's processes operate effectively, and that appropriate, accurate and timely information is presented to the Board to enable effective decisions to be taken
- Engage the Board in reviewing and planning its composition and monitoring its performance on a regular basis, and ensure that required changes or developments are identified and enacted
- Ensure that an appropriate process is in place for the recruitment of new directors to the Board of Thera Trust and subsidiary companies
- Ensure that an induction programme and ongoing training is in place for new and existing directors
- Lead a culture that promotes the highest standards of governance and probity
- Plan and conduct Board meetings effectively
- On behalf of the Board, monitor and review the performance of each member of the Board

Strategy:

- Guide and support Executive Directors in the development of strategy and its promotion to the Board
- Ensure that appropriate mechanisms are in place to enable the Board to monitor progress towards agreed strategic goals

The Executives

- Develop and maintain a close working relationship with the Executive Directors and enable the board to hold them individually to account

The Appointment

- Provide support and guidance to the Executives to deliver strategies agreed by the Board
- Provide information to the Remuneration Committee in relation to Executive performance

Subsidiaries

- Be a champion of excellence and good practice amongst Chairs of subsidiary Boards Board Committees
- Chair the committee responsible for appointments to the Board and to the Boards of subsidiary companies
- Monitor and review the operation and performance of the Board's sub-committees
- Develop and maintain close communication with Chairs of subsidiary boards

Performance indicators for the role

- Feedback from the senior independent director on behalf of non-executives on the performance of the role in "managing" the Board
- Direct feedback from executives on the same
- Routine effective Board performance review in place
- Clear strategies in place for Thera, and all Board members clear on progress
- Assessment of abilities against competencies for the role

The Person

This is a senior appointment requiring a mature, well-grounded and experienced individual with excellent chairing skills, first-class communication and relationship skills and, above all, a real enthusiasm for Thera's work, values and vision. Candidates for the appointment may come from a range of backgrounds, whether in the commercial or non-profit sectors (ideally both) and applicants will be assessed against the following criteria:

- A demonstrable passion for support to people with a learning disability, and a belief in the values and style and approach of Thera
- The stature and gravitas to guide a team running a complex organisation with a turnover of £60m
- Significant experience of operating at Board level in organisations of relevant scale and complexity
- Strong and relevant experience in a leadership role (Chief or Group Executive, Managing Director or Chair) as above
- Ability to work with, support and guide, a variety of individuals and teams at all levels
- Supportive of Thera's fundamental principle that Thera will be controlled by people with a learning disability, recognising that this may require organisational models that run counter to accepted practice in other organisations
- Experience in the not-for-profit sector would be strongly desirable

How to Apply & Appointment Process

Applications

The closing date for applications is **Monday 28th January 2019 (12.00 noon)**.

Interested candidates should apply by email (preferred) to our retained consultant, David Richards of OCT Associates (david@oct-associates.co.uk). Before applying, they are encouraged to contact David (by email or on 07798 523422) for an informal discussion about the appointment.

Applications should comprise a detailed CV, giving full career details, achievements and qualifications, together with a short covering letter (no more than two pages). This should explain your interest in the appointment, and particularly highlight what might make you stand out from others as a strong candidate for it.

We also ask you to complete and return the Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form, available for download separately. This form is for monitoring purposes only. It will be kept separately from the rest of your application and is not seen by staff involved in short-listing or selection decisions.

Since we will correspond with you by email and phone, please ensure that you provide us with an email address and phone numbers that you are happy for us to use for this purpose. Please provide a mobile phone contact if possible.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Thera is committed to equality of opportunity and diversity in all of the roles within the organisation.

A disability or health problem does not preclude full consideration for the appointment, as any reasonable adjustments will be explored. This information may need to be shared with the selection panel in order for them to consider any such adjustments. Please inform us in your application what arrangements you might need in the appointment or in attending for interview.

How to Apply & Appointment Process

SELECTION PROCESS

The Board's Nominations Committee will meet to discuss applications and may invite a small number of those who appear to fit the requirement most closely to attend an initial interview with David Richards of OCT Associates.

A short list of the best-qualified candidates will then be invited to meet the Nominations Committee. One or more candidates may then be invited back to meet other members of the Board and the Executive and there may also be opportunities to visit some of Thera's subsidiary company operations before the appointment is offered to the most appropriate candidate.

TRAVEL EXPENSES

Reasonable travel expenses will be reimbursed to applicants required to attend for interview, by application to OCT Associates. Rail travel should be Standard Class, and mileage claims will be reimbursed at Thera's standard rates. Please discuss any significant expenses (eg international travel or long journeys) with David Richards before incurring the expense.