

**involve**

**CHAIR**



# WELCOME

**Democracy is key to tackling the challenges we face, but it isn't working as it should. If you believe, as we do, that a new type of democracy is needed, and that the UK is on the cusp of making this change - then this could be the role for you.**

Over the last 20 years the world has seen the growth of deliberative and participatory democracy – now used from Canada to Copenhagen, from the Philippines to Paris.

During this time, Involve has led the way in the UK in advocating and campaigning for deliberative democracy. We have run hundreds of high-quality processes which demonstrate how participatory democracy works in practice. We have grown the capacity for decision-makers to use these approaches confidently.

It's become clear that the challenges of the 21st century are so complex they need communities, individuals, politics, business and civil society to work together well every day, to solve them. And the UK now has a wealth of evidence that deliberative and participatory work delivers more effective decisions, builds trust, empowers people from all walks of life, builds community cohesion, and tackles polarisation.

We are now at a critical tipping point when it comes to making deliberative and participatory democracy a real, everyday part of government.

In the UK, the Starmer government was elected this year on a promise of improving standards in public life and delivering on public services. However, public faith in politics and democracy is low – an approach which focuses on delivery may not be enough to shore up fragile democracy.

Support for populism in the US and across Europe holds urgent lessons for the UK. Commentators increasingly warn that in many Western democracies, the left adopts a technocratic agenda and doesn't hear the everyday concerns of people. On the other hand, the right offers solutions that appeal to ordinary people, but which don't address systemic problems.

And neither side offers the public a chance to have a say, or to weigh up the tradeoffs in different directions. In the UK, this presents the risk that people will vote in autocrats, who are then able to dismantle democratic institutions and erode human rights.

The tools, mindsets and approaches of participatory and deliberative democracy are not the whole solution - but if they are institutionalised and used consistently, they can be a powerful remedy.

The time is now.

Involve has an important opportunity for strategic impact – embedding institutionalised participation and deliberation at national, devolved and local levels.

In recent years Involve has developed to meet this opportunity. While it was always respected, it has become more influential. We have explicitly grown our advocacy and capacity building skills, and begun to work at grass roots levels as well as with institutional commissioners. We have a new impact framework which draws attention to the mindsets and capacities needed, and shows how our high quality projects create change in institutions and in democratic norms.

Our Board of Trustees has shown visionary leadership and helped the charity step up into a leadership role for the UK. We are looking for a new Chair, with outstanding leadership skills and an interest in participatory decision making, who would like to take us on the next step of this journey.

Join us, and steward a confident, maturing organisation looking to grow its impact significantly. Help us to shift power in practice, foreground the voices of those systemically undervalued, and move the UK to a place where deliberative and participatory approaches are a normal, everyday part of democracy.

**Ed Cox, Chair**

**Sarah Castell, CEO**

# WHO WE ARE

We're the UK's leading public participation charity. Our mission is to lead the UK in making participation and deliberation an everyday, integral part of democracy, to help meet the challenges of the 21st century.

Our purpose is to change the system to shift power in practice, to create a better democracy with people more involved in setting the agenda of power. And this will help bring about our vision; a vibrant democracy where everyone can shape a society that works for us all.

We believe that decision-making in the UK needs to be more:

- **Open** - so that people can understand, influence and hold decision-makers to account for the actions and inactions of their governments;
- **Participatory** - so that people have the freedom, support and opportunity to shape their communities and influence the decisions that affect their lives; and,
- **Deliberative** - so that people can exchange and acknowledge different perspectives, understand conflict and find common ground, and build a shared vision for society.

Find out more <https://www.involve.org.uk/about/>

Since 2003 we have been promoting and practising participatory and deliberative decision-making. We have worked with governments, parliaments, civil society organisations, academics and the public across the UK and internationally to put people at the heart of decision-making. Take a look at the [Timeline of Involve](#) to follow our work through the last 20 years.

Involve is a charity and a company limited by guarantee. We have physical offices in London and Belfast.

Our Charity Commission listing can be viewed [here](#).



# WHAT WE DO

We demonstrate how citizens can help solve our biggest challenges.

Our work is focused in three areas:

- **Advocacy and communications** – Making the case for participation and deliberation as core and expected parts of democracy, and ensuring that people in positions of power and influence understand and support their use;
- **Capacity building and standards** – Building the capacity of public servants and practitioners, and developing the body of evidence, principles and standards that support good participatory and deliberative practice; and,
- **Innovation and practice** – Encouraging frequent use of participatory and deliberative processes, and ensuring continuous learning and innovation to improve democracy.

Each year, we work with around 2,000 members of the public to engage in over 70,000 hours of work to tackle the big challenges communities face. In recent years, we led [Climate Assembly UK](#), the [Citizens Jury on Assisted Dying in Jersey](#), [Scotland's Climate Assembly](#), the [Sciencewise UKRI Programme](#), and set up the [UK Democracy Network](#), amongst other landmark public engagement and democratic renewal projects. We are just beginning a new programme of work, the [School for Everyday Democracy](#).

As part of this work, Involve has trained and supported thousands of people in how to build a more participatory society.

**Find out more:** [www.involve.org.uk/our-work/](http://www.involve.org.uk/our-work/) and recent annual reports [2021/22](#) and [2022/23](#)

# OUR VALUES

- Collaboration – because change comes when broad coalitions of people work towards a common vision;
- Equality – because everyone in society has an equal right to be listened to and participate in decisions that affect their lives. No one should be held back by societal divisions or prejudice;
- Independence – because we are committed to the integrity and impartiality of participatory and deliberative processes;
- Purpose – because participation must have an impact. We reject tokenistic or ineffectual engagement; and,
- Quality – because effective participation requires time, attention and commitment.



# ROLE DESCRIPTION

**Role title** Chair

## ROLE PURPOSE

The chair provides inclusive leadership to the board of trustees, ensures that each trustee fulfils their duties and responsibilities for the effective governance of the charity, and holds the management team to account for delivery of the charity's vision and mission. In addition, the chair works closely with the management team; supports and, where appropriate, challenges the CEO; and ensures that the board functions as a unit. They act as an ambassador and the public face of the charity in partnership with members of the staff team.

The Chair's role is to lead in a collaborative environment, so we are looking for someone who is interested in, and is able to, model participatory decision making inside the organisation as well as championing our methods and mindsets outside. You do not need to be an expert, but be alive to these ways of working and leading, and open to support.

## MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CHAIR

### STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP

Providing leadership to the charity and its board, ensuring that we have maximum impact towards our vision and mission, including:

- Ensuring that trustees fulfil their duties and responsibilities for the effective governance of the charity;
- Ensuring that the board operates within its charitable objectives, and provides a clear strategic direction for the charity;
- Ensuring that the board is able to regularly review major risks and associated opportunities, and satisfy itself that systems are in place to take advantage of opportunities, and manage and mitigate the risks;
- Ensuring that the board fulfils its duties to ensure sound financial health of the charity, with systems in place to ensure financial accountability

### GOVERNANCE

Ensuring that the governance arrangements are working in the most effective way for the charity, including:

- Developing the knowledge and capability of the board of trustees;
- Addressing and resolving any conflicts within the board;
- Appraising the performance of the trustees and the board on an annual basis;
- Ensuring that the board of trustees is regularly refreshed and incorporates the right balance of skills, knowledge and experience needed to govern the charity effectively;
- Working with the board and staff team to ensure that our future governance reflects the participatory principles of the charity;
- Working within any policies adopted by the charity;
- In particular at the stage of development we are at, able to hold and explore a review of future governance to ensure that our own governance supports the principles of participatory governance we espouse.

## EXTERNAL RELATIONS

Acting as an ambassador for the charity and its vision, including:

- Maintaining close relationships with key members of the government and with key influencers;
- Acting as a spokesperson for the organisation, when appropriate;
- Representing the charity at external functions, meetings and events.

## EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS

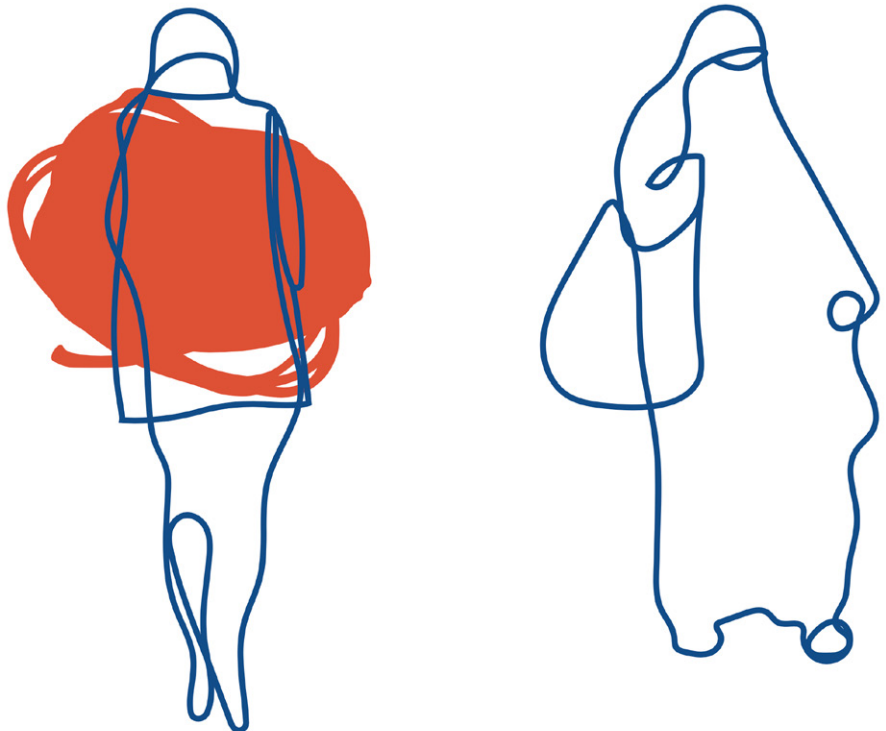
Chairing meetings of the board of trustees effectively and efficiently, bringing impartiality and objectivity to the decision-making process, including:

- Ensuring that trustees are fully engaged and that decisions are taken in the best, long-term interests of the charity and that the board takes collective ownership;
- Fostering constructive relationships with and between the trustees;
- Encouraging meaningful staff and trustee relationships, for example via the effective functioning of the four Subcommittees (Capacity Building & Standards, Advocacy & Communications, Innovation & Practice, Finance & Risk).
- Working closely with the CEO to give direction to board policy-making and to ensure that meetings are well planned, meaningful and reflect the responsibilities of trustees;
- Monitoring to ensure that decisions taken at meetings are implemented.

## RELATIONSHIP WITH THE CEO AND THE WIDER MANAGEMENT TEAM

Establishing a strong working relationship with the CEO, ensuring they are held to account for achieving agreed strategic objectives, including:

- Ensuring regular contact and maintaining an open and supportive relationship within which each can speak openly about concerns, worries and challenges, whilst respecting the boundaries which exist between the two roles;
- Liaising to maintain an overview of the charity's affairs, providing support as necessary;
- Conducting an annual appraisal and remuneration review for the CEO and ongoing feedback as needed; this should be done in the way that reflects the open feedback and performance culture we seek to grow at Involve;
- Ensuring that the CEO has the opportunity for professional development and has appropriate external professional support.



# PERSON SPECIFICATION

## PART ONE

### KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE

#### ESSENTIAL

- Experience of charity governance, including an understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship;
- Significant experience of chairing meetings and events;
- Understanding of the landscape around deliberative and participatory democracy, and appreciating the different ways of creating impact Involve can have, within government and beyond;
- Some experience of doing personal work on their own relation to rank, power and privilege, and some familiarity with the work of applying key concepts in their leadership.

#### DESIRABLE

- Good networks with politicians and key influencers;
- Experience of fundraising, especially core fundraising;
- Knowledge of communications and media;
- Experience of related advisory fields such as think tanks, consultancy; experience not limited to the broader charity and NGO sectors;
- Expertise in financial management, an understanding of charity finances and a perspective on the growth options and strategic decisions available to a medium size organisation like Involve.

## PART TWO

### SKILLS AND ABILITIES

- An ability to foster and promote an open and collaborative team environment;
- Tact and diplomacy, with the ability to listen and engage effectively;
- Good, independent judgement, and preparedness to make unpopular recommendations to the board of trustees;
- Strong interpersonal and relationship building abilities and comfortable in an ambassadorial role.

## PART THREE

### LEADERSHIP STYLE AND BEHAVIOURS

- A commitment to Involve and to our vision, mission and values;
- Willingness to devote the necessary time and effort and be available to staff for advice and enquiries on an ad hoc basis;
- Commitment to, and experience of, elevating the voices of systemically undervalued and marginalised groups in relation to power.

We are committed to equal opportunities and we want our board to benefit from the advantages to our culture and work that a diverse board brings, such as those arising from different skills, life experiences and backgrounds. We would particularly welcome people who bring lived experience of systemic power and privilege dynamics. These might be (but not restricted to) class, age, race and ethnicity, religion, gender and sexuality, physical disability, neurodiversity.

# TERMS OF APPOINTMENT

## TERM OF APPOINTMENT AND REMUNERATION

The Chair will serve a three-year term and can be re-appointed for one additional term.

This appointment is offered on a voluntary basis, though any travel expenses will be reimbursed in line with Involve's policies.

## TIME COMMITMENT AND LOCATION

The role requires approximately 12 days per year.

Meetings are typically held in London. This includes:

- Attending quarterly board meetings (3 hours) at our offices in Bethnal Green, London;
- Attendance at an annual away day;
- Participation in board sub-committees, as required;
- Reading board papers and other preparation for meetings;
- Other ad hoc support as required.

# HOW TO APPLY

To make an application, please go to <https://starfishsearch.com/jobs/involve-chair/> and click on the apply now button, with the following prepared:

- Your CV (no more than three sides).
- A covering letter that sets out your motivation for the role and describes the specific experience you can bring to the appointment.

We would also be grateful if you would complete the Equality and Diversity monitoring form on the online application process. This form is for monitoring purposes only and is not treated as part of your application.

**Deadline for applications is Friday 24th January 2025**

## RECRUITMENT TIMETABLE

<b>Closing date:</b>	Friday 24th January 2025
<b>Preliminary interviews:</b>	Likely to be w/c 3rd February 2025
<b>Final Panel interviews:</b>	Likely to be w/c 17th February 2025