



**Ambitious
about Autism**

Recruitment Information Pack

Chair of Ambitious College Governing Body



**Ambitious
about Autism**
Schools Trust

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Introduction

Thank you for your interest in becoming the Chair of the Ambitious College Governing Body.

Ambitious about Autism is the national charity for children and young people with autism. Founded 21 years ago, our mission is simple but ambitious; to make the ordinary possible for children and young people with autism. Our new three-year strategy will see us developing more services, focusing on raising awareness and understanding of autism and continuing to successfully influence policy. We're an ambitious and innovative organisation at a particularly exciting stage of growth and diversification.

We've achieved a great deal over the last few years, but have ambitious plans for the future, which includes further growing and developing our Ambitious College. We're continuing to raise our profile and capacity to influence, but good governance remains an absolute priority for us.

We're now looking for a Chair for our Ambitious College Governing Body, as our existing Chair retires.

Strong experience at leadership level, and of ensuring excellent governance, will be essential for this appointment. A strategic thinker with excellent relationship-building, communication and interpersonal skills, you are likely to be someone who has already achieved real standing in your field and be able to offer established networks. You will also have an important ambassadorial role to play. To do this, an appreciation of the issues that relate to our work would be useful. Experience in further education, supported employment or adult social care for people with learning disability and autism would be relevant. We also welcome applicants with lived experience of autism.

Above all, you will share our absolute commitment to our mission and values. In return, this appointment offers the opportunity to shape our future and ensure we continue to have a positive and lasting impact on the lives of young people with autism.



Neil Goulden
Chair of Board of Trustees



About Autism

Ambitious about Autism is committed to making the ordinary possible for children and young people with autism.

- **Autism is a lifelong developmental disability which affects 1 in 100 people in the UK. It affects the way a person communicates and how they experience the world around them.**
- **Children with autism face many barriers: these include a lack of understanding of their needs and how to meet them, a lack of good quality services and opportunities to have their views taken into account.**

As a result:

- 4 in 10 children with autism have been excluded from school and 40% are bullied.
- Only 16% of people with autism work full-time and 90% remain dependant on their families for the rest of their lives.
- Many families struggle to support their child and live in poverty and feel isolated.

This must be addressed with urgency if we are to stop the wasted opportunities for these children, their families and our society.

Ambitious about Autism

Our History

Ambitious about Autism is the national charity for children and young people with autism.

The charity was established in 1997 by a group of families of children with autism concerned at the lack of appropriate provision for their children. They set out to establish a school that would support their children to learn, thrive and achieve positive outcomes. Following a major capital fundraising campaign and a series of temporary locations and premises, the school and the charity moved into purpose-built accommodation in 2008, together creating the Pears National Centre for Autism Education. Since then the charity has grown its education services, opening both Ambitious College and The Rise School in 2014, and extended its national influencing and enabling activities.

The Ambitious about Autism Schools Trust was set up in 2014 to support the development of free schools and operates the Rise School.

Our vision

A world where the ordinary is the everyday experience of children and young people with autism.

Our mission

Our ambition is to make the ordinary possible for children and young people with autism.

Our Values

Children and young people with autism are at the centre of all that we do: their well-being and safety is our number one priority.

To achieve this:


- **We are ambitious**

We invest in our people and aim high to make sure our work has the biggest impact for children and young people with autism and their families.

- **We value difference**

We know that creating equal opportunity does not mean one size fits all. We aim to make ourselves accessible to children and young people with autism across the spectrum, from all communities and backgrounds.

- **We are team players**



Collaboratively working and building strong partnerships are essential if we are to make the ordinary possible for children and young people with autism.

➤ **We are open**

We strive to be open – open to new ideas, open in how we work and open in how we make decisions.

➤ **We are experts**

We respect and develop the expertise of our talented staff and make sure that we are evidence-based, rigorous and accountable in everything that we do.

Our Aims


1. **More and better services** that meet the needs of children and young people with autism effectively
2. **Greater awareness and understanding of the needs** of children with autism and how best to meet these needs
3. **Policy at national and local level** that takes into account the needs of children with autism
4. **Ambitious about Autism has the capacity** to deliver its strategy.

Our Services

Ambitious about Autism is focused on developing innovative service models that demonstrate excellent outcomes for young people and are replicable and sustainable. We are committed to creating pathways to enable young people to live a fulfilling life as part of their community.

School years: TreeHouse School is a non-maintained special school for pupils aged 4 to 19 with autism. Established in 1997, the school has an Outstanding Ofsted rating and is well known for its pioneering evidence-based approach. The charity set up a multi-academy trust, Ambitious about Autism Schools Trust, which developed and launched its first free school, The Rise School in September 2014.

College years: Ambitious about Autism runs Ambitious College which opened in September 2014. This is London's only registered Specialist College dedicated to educating and training young people with complex autism aged 16-25 years. The college is now based on two permanent campuses co-located and in partnership with mainstream further education colleges.



Capacity building for families and professionals: Ambitious about Autism continues to provide training and support to enable families and professionals to support children and young people with autism. We are the appointed Autism Education Trust (AET) training hub for London for school and Post 16 services.

Our research work

Ambitious about Autism works directly and in partnership to increase understanding of the needs of children and young people with autism and how they can be met. We do this by carrying out, commissioning and collaborating on research projects. The charity continues to work as a founding partner with the Institute of Education on the work of the Centre for Research into Autism and Education. We also work with Bangor University to evaluate the effectiveness of our work and to build the evidence base for autism education.

Our awareness raising activities

Building awareness and understanding of autism and the work we do to support children and young people with autism is critical to our ongoing success. We communicate with and involve children and young people, parents and carers, the children's workforce, decision makers and influencers to support the delivery of our mission. Ambitious about Autism is growing and developing its online community, Talk about Autism, to provide support and as a means to engage the autism community in our policy and influencing work.

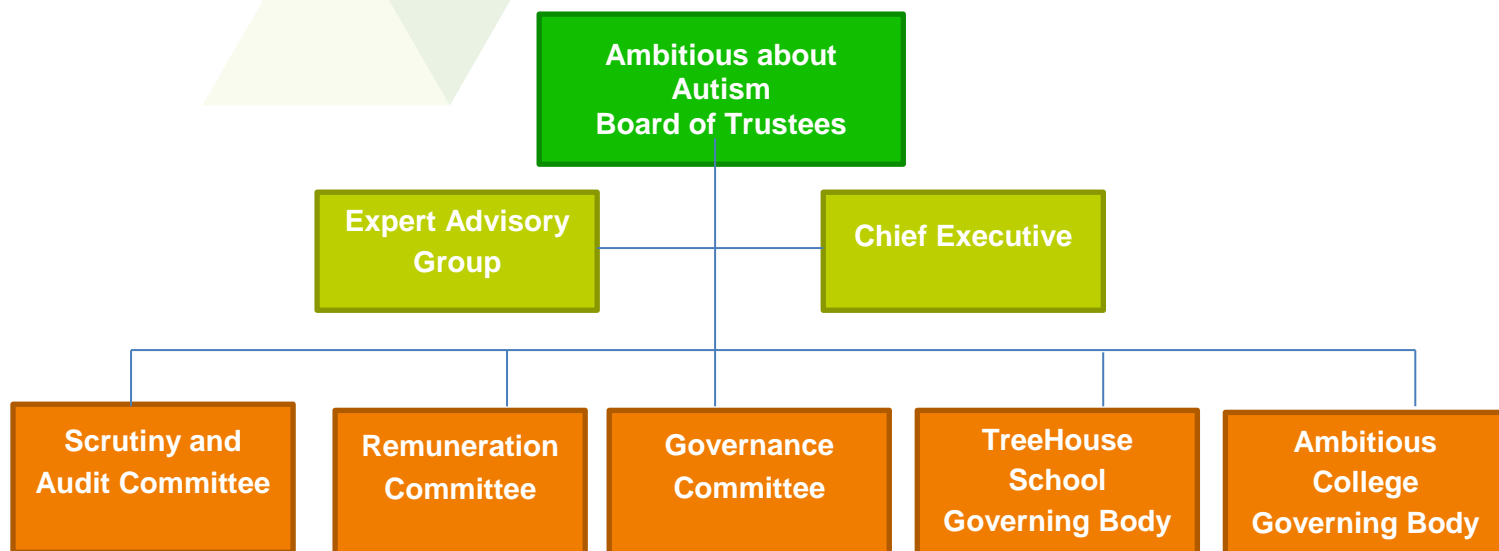
Our policy and participation work

Our policy work is evidence-based and focuses on influencing the policies and practices of both local and central government. Ambitious about Autism works to respond to policy developments and to proactively campaign on the issues that matter to children and young people with autism and their families. We have developed and grown our participation work and are working hard to influence the implementation of the Children & Families Act, alongside other key legislation. We provide platforms for young people and parents to share their experiences directly with policy and decision-makers. We also use our experience as a service provider to inform policy and practice.

For further information about our work, please see www.ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk

Organisation Structure

Ambitious about Autism Governance Structure



Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees has overall responsibility for the governance of Ambitious about Autism. It consists of individuals who have the skills, competencies and perspective needed to govern the organisation and includes a number of parents of children with autism. The Board members are:

Neil Goulden Chair of Board of Trustees

Koral Anderson

Maria Chambers Chair of Ambitious College Governing Body (retiring)

John Constantine

Martyn Craddock

Paul Disley-Tindell Chair of Remuneration Committee

Michael Fiddy

Lesley Longstone Vice Chair of Board of Trustees, Chair of Impact Committee

Elizabeth Stanton Chair of Scrutiny and Audit Committee, Treasurer

Philippa Stobbs Chair of TreeHouse School Governing Body

Charlotte Warner

Ambitious College Governing Body

The Ambitious College Governing Body plays a crucial part in supporting the development and implementation of the Quality Improvement Plan, in scrutinising the performance of the College and working with the senior leadership team to develop an outstanding setting that acts as a model of best practice.

We are recruiting for the Chair of the Governing Body. Members of the Governing Body are:

Maria Chambers	Chair of Ambitious College Governing Body (retiring)
Bola Aworinde	Parent Governor
Vivienne Berkeley	Ambitious College Principal
Yolande Burgess	Local Authority/Commissioner Governor
Andy Forbes	Associate Governor
Jolanta Lasota	Chief Executive
Kevin Oakhill	Associate Governor
Geoffrey Ocen	Community Governor
Audrey Pidgeon	Staff Governor
Ann Ruthven	Associate Governor

Executive Leadership Team

The leadership team is responsible to the trustees for running Ambitious about Autism and delivering the strategy agreed by the trustee Board. The Executive Leadership Team comprises of:

Jolanta Lasota	Chief Executive
Viv Berkeley	Principal Ambitious College
Danae Leaman-Hill	Director of Fundraising
Louise Posocco	Director of Finance
Sarah Roscoe	Headteacher, Rise School
Kerry Sternstein	Headteacher, TreeHouse School
Zoe Weaver	Director of People
Alison Worsley	Director of External Affairs

Governor Role Description

The Chair is responsible for the efficient operation of the governing body, and particularly for the conduct of effective meetings.

The Chair should:

- lead the governing body and ensure that it meets all its legal responsibilities
- be well informed about education issues, both locally and nationally, and should share this understanding and knowledge with the governing body
- be well trained and should continue to engage in regular, relevant training
- work in partnership with the Principal through regular meetings, providing appropriate support and challenge
- establish an effective working relationship with the clerk to the governing body
- build an effective team, which understands its role and is well trained
- encourage all members of the governing body to undertake appropriate training, especially induction training for anyone new to governance
- ensure that induction into the governing body is provided for new governors, and perhaps that a mentor or buddy is arranged
- make sure that all members have the opportunity to contribute during meetings
- give a clear lead in organising and evaluating the governing body's work, valuing the contribution of all members and staff
- delegate roles and tasks and ensures all governors are fully involved
- encourage the development of the Vice Chair role
- operate as the first amongst equals but actively model and promote the development of leadership skills
- co-operate with other agencies to support school improvement
- have a positive impact on the effectiveness of the Governing Body.

Person Specification

Essential:

- Interest in and empathy for issues affecting young people with disabilities and their families.
- Experience on a Board/Committee/Governing Body.
- Capacity to Chair and prepare for, attend and participate fully in meetings.
- Ability to participate actively in group decision making.
- Ability to represent the charity internally and externally.

Desirable:

- Experience of Chairing a Board/Committee/Governing Body.

- Experience of further education, supported employment or adult services for people with a learning disability and/or autism.
- Lived experience of autism and/or knowledge and understanding of special educational needs and disability issues.
- Knowledge and understanding of the charitable sector.

Terms and Conditions

The role of a Governor is voluntary. Governors are re-reimbursed all reasonable related expenses in accordance with Ambitious about Autism's expenses policy, including travel, subsistence and child-care. This role is estimated to take one day per month, as the Chair of the Governing Body will need to attend Governing Body meeting, monitoring visits and events.

Indicative Timetable

All applications will be acknowledged. All shortlisted candidates will be invited to an interview on **29th January 2018** and for a Stakeholder Day on **26th January 2018**.

Stage	Timescale
Role advertised	15th December 2017
Closing date for applications	16 th January 2018
Shortlisting meeting	19 th January 2018
Stakeholder engagement (including College visit and informal meeting with Principal and Chief Executive)	26 th January 2018
Interviews	29 th January 2018

How to apply

Please send the following to **Jonathan Adamides-Vellapah, Ambitious about Autism, Woodside Avenue, London, N10 3JA** or alternatively via email at jadamides-vellapah@ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk:

- a comprehensive CV.
- a detailed supporting statement that fully addresses the appointment criteria set out in the person specification and includes your motivation for applying for this appointment. **Please tell us if you are not available on any of the dates relevant to this process.**
- details of two referees, one of whom we would be able to contact at shortlist stage.

Please also ensure you have also completed and submitted the equal opportunities monitoring form included with this pack. The information on the form will be treated as confidential, and used for statistical purposes only. The form will not be treated as part of your application.

If you have any queries about any aspect of the appointment process, need additional information or wish to have an informal and confidential discussion, contact Jonathan Adamides-Vellapah (details above), who will respect the privacy of any initial approach or expression of interest in this role, whether formal or informal.

