



 **M·R·S·Independent Living**

INFORMATION PACK

FOR PROSPECTIVE TRUSTEES



Introduction

MRS Independent Living (MRS) is a small, local charity that has been working in North East London for over 35 years, supporting people to stay independent, active and connected to their communities.

Becoming a Trustee with MRS is a chance to become actively involved in a local charity with strong community links, and to use your skills, experience and insights to improve the lives of people who need and would like support.

The aim of this information pack is to inform you about what being a Trustee involves, provide some useful background on our organisation, and point you in the direction of further information.

Here, you can find information about:

- [What we do](#)
- Our [vision, mission](#) and [values](#)
- [How we operate](#)
- What the [role of Trustee](#) involves
- The [skills and experience](#) we're looking for
- The [application process](#) for becoming a Trustee



We get to talk, joke and be with each other, so we know we are not alone. We have even made new friends along the way. Coming here stopped the world from being a lonely place for us.



One of our **Hackney Dudes**

What we do

Three themes guide what we do:

1. Keeping active and preventing falls
2. Living safely and well at home
3. Peer support and lifelong learning

We provide a range of services and projects that are all focused on helping people stay independent, active and connected to their communities.

Our services and projects currently include:

- **Islington Adaptations:** Assessing people's needs at home and fitting minor aids and adaptations to help them stay safe and mobile.
- **Staying Steady:** Community exercise classes focusing on strength and balance, and home safety checks for people at risk of falls.
- **Otago:** Home-based exercise for frail older people who can't easily access community exercise classes.
- **Hackney Dudes:** A social club for older men, aiming to reduce isolation and loneliness.
- **Digital Confidence:** A weekly digital drop-in, short courses and workshops for people over 50 who want to build their confidence using digital technology and the internet.
- **Making Room:** Our therapeutic decluttering service for people with hoarding behaviour.
- **Side by Side:** A community-based advice and outreach service to users of Gillett Square in Dalston.

We fund these activities mainly through trading (providing services) and fundraising for grants from trusts/foundations, local authorities and the NHS.

You can see details of our finances and download copies of our [annual report and accounts](#) for the past five years from the Charity Commission website.

About MRS

This is our **vision**, the change we want to see in the world:

A society where everyone has a sense of control over their lives and the ability to stay independent, active and connected to the world around them.

This is our **mission**, the specific role MRS plays in achieving our vision:

We provide practical help so that people who need support can live safely and well in their homes and communities.

We work primarily with older people, people with disabilities and people facing mental health challenges.

Our **area of operation** is Hackney, Islington and the City of London, but we also work occasionally in surrounding boroughs in North East London.

“

It was wonderful, it helped me a lot. I'm still mobile, I'm not so dependent, not so bedridden.

”

*Participant in our **Otago home exercise** programme*

These are our **values** as an organisation:

- Real world perspective: People have overlapping physical, mental and emotional needs and we respond to these as holistically as we can. .
- People have assets: We all bring valuable strengths to the table that can benefit the community.
- Collectivity: Everyone benefits when we come together to support each other and share experiences and learning.
- Empathetic and non-judgemental: We always attempt to understand the different contexts in which people live their lives.
- Equity: Disadvantaged groups and communities should have equal access to opportunities and be supported to exercise their rights.
- User-led: People define the approaches that work for them, and we work alongside them with these in mind.

And these are the **principles** that help guide our decision-making and the way we work:

- We work in an evidence-based way
- We support innovation
- We offer flexibility
- We meet needs others don't
- We offer free or low cost services for our community
- We build capacity
- We identify, build and capitalise on networks

How we operate

- We are a charitable company which means we are a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee.
- This means the Trustees of the charity are also the Company Directors (henceforth only referred to as Trustees for convenience)
- Trustees are members of the charity.
- All trustees are elected at the Annual General Meeting for a term of one year and can also stand for re-election at this time if they wish to remain a Trustee.
- Detailed information about our aims and charitable purposes, and how we are structured and run, can be found in our **Memorandum and Articles of Association**. All prospective trustees will be provided with a copy.

About the Management Committee

- We currently have six Trustees.
- Trustees form the Management Committee together with the Director and Assistant Director.
- Two Trustees serve as Co-Chairs, and one as Treasurer.
- The Management Committee delegates day-to-day running of the charity to the Director and Assistant Director.

Practicalities

- The Management Committee meets five times a year. At the moment, meetings are usually held virtually for two hours on a weekday evening.
- If attending virtual meetings would be a barrier for you, we can explore a hybrid approach with the option to attend in-person instead.

The role of a Trustee

Reach Volunteering has a good, short summary of what to expect as a Trustee

If you have more time, you can also read the Charity Commission's guide 'The Essential Trustee'

Being a Trustee of a charity is a legal responsibility that carries certain duties and responsibilities.

Trustees have **overall responsibility** for:

- Ensuring MRS complies with its governing document, charity law, company law and any other relevant legislation or regulations
- Ensuring that we embody our values and adhere to our principles of working
- Ensuring the good management, effective governance and ongoing financial sustainability of the organisation
- Safeguarding our resources and ensuring they are applied in pursuit of our charitable objects.

What you will do as a Trustee

- You'll attend our Board (also known as the Management Committee) meetings and contribute to discussions about what we do and how we operate. There are five Board meetings per year (approximately one every 3 months)
- You'll read the papers beforehand and come prepared to ask questions, share your views and opinions, and constructively challenge proposals.
- You'll analyse information and use it to help make collective decisions that are informed and evidence-based.
- Depending on your skills and interests, you may be invited to become more closely involved in specific areas of charity management as a Trustee 'champion'.

Trustee skills and experience

We're looking for people who can bring a diversity of insight and experience to our Management Committee. We expect all Trustees to have:

- An understanding of one or more of the communities with whom MRS works
- A basic knowledge of how charities or social enterprises operate
- The ability to build relationships and make others feel valued and appreciated
- The ability to ask probing questions and query information
- The ability to actively listen and be respectful of different views
- The ability to think creatively
- The confidence to contribute ideas and respectfully challenge thinking
- A commitment to our organisational vision, values and ethos
- A commitment to honesty, integrity and confidentiality
- A commitment to team working and decision through consensus
- A willingness to learn about and understand all areas of our work.

The application process

If you'd like to apply to become a Trustee, please follow the steps below. If you feel that any of these steps would present a barrier to you applying, please get in touch because we want to make the process as accessible as possible and will explore alternative options with you.

Step 1

Express your interest. You can do this by writing a letter, or making a video or audio recording explaining why you would like to become a Trustee and what knowledge, skills and experience (personal and/or professional) you can contribute. If you have a CV, you can include this too, but it's not essential.

Please email your letter (or video/audio recording) to volunteering@mrsindependentliving.org, or you can post to:

MRS Independent Living
The Adiaha Antigha Centre
24-30 Dalston Lane
London
E8 3AZ

Please note that if you find any of this difficult but would still like to apply, you can call us on 0330 380 1013 and ask to skip directly to step 2.

Step 2

Informal chat with the Director and one other Trustee.

Step 3

Formal interview with Trustees.

Step 4

Chance to observe a Management Committee meeting before formal appointment.

Any questions?

If you have any questions, observations or things you'd like to discuss further before applying to be a Trustee, please feel free to contact Natalie Pink (Director) for an informal conversation at Director@mrsindependentliving.org or 0330 380 1013.

Registered charity: 801419

Company limited by guarantee: 02086284

Website: www.mrsindependentliving.org

**We look forward to hearing
from you!**