

PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL

Candidate Brief



London Plus

Chair

Y0301

May 2022

Managing Director

Sarah Thewlis

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Welcome from Dominic Pinkney and Martin Brookes, Chair and Chief Executive

Dear Candidate,

Thank you for your interest in applying for the role of Chair at London Plus. London Plus supports and champions charities and community groups in London. It does this through networks, data, communications, as well as connections across the capital. We hope that this information pack excites you about getting involved in our future work.

Set up in its current form in 2019, London Plus found its feet, and demonstrated its purpose and value, in the pandemic. We are now building on this work as we develop a new strategy and look to support the breadth of charities and community groups across London.

As well as drawing on the experiences and lessons of the last three years, the new strategy will think about how to develop and support networks more effectively. It will refine the existing narrative of the charity and, importantly, look to develop its funding model further to ensure long-term sustainability.

We are already a trusted partner of many organisations across all 32 boroughs in the capital, from local charities and community groups through to the Greater London Authority (GLA), London Councils, and our core funder, City Bridge Trust. Having these connections, strong networks, and an experienced and focused team, is important to our success.

Our Board is a key part of ensuring these connections and our reach remains strong. This includes their provision of good governance, checking our strategy and funding are sound, as well as helping through expertise, knowledge, and connections.

London Plus is a small but influential charity. The position of Chair is crucial to the success of the organisation and provides an opportunity for the right candidate to support London's charities and community groups through our work. The new Chair will bring energy and commitment to help us become the "go-to" partner in connecting London's charities, communities, policymakers, funders, and businesses.

If this sounds appealing, we would love to hear from you. For a confidential conversation with our recruitment partners, Thewlis Graham Associates, please contact Sarah Thewlis, Managing Director on 0207 850 4781 or email applications@thewlisgraham.com. Sarah will be happy to discuss this opportunity with you and answer any questions you may have.

Yours sincerely,



Dominic Pinkney and Martin Brookes
Chair and Chief Executive

2. More about London Plus

London Plus helps charities and community groups in London to do more and do better. Through this, we aim to help tackle disadvantage and inequality in the capital.

Part of our work is improving the information available to charities and community groups, helping them be effective and achieve more. We do this by connecting them to each other; supporting them to tell others about their work; and sharing information about funding and policies. We also connect them to policymakers and funders, including by presenting their views and information about their work. This helps improve understanding about the voluntary and community sector and can influence policy to better meet its needs.

Our agenda is important, and it is ambitious, to raise the profile of the voluntary and community sector and help it achieve even more. London's entrenched inequalities and high levels of disadvantage and deprivation must be tackled in part through strengthening communities and community voice. The pandemic has reminded many of the power of community and the pivotal role of formal charities and informal community groups in this.

To succeed we must be a visible, trusted, and influential voice within and for the voluntary and community sector. We must also be a reliable and effective partner for regional and local government, as well as London's community of funders. We sit in a complex web of charities, community groups, policymakers and funders spanning the whole of London. Our work requires us to make sense of this to maximise the chances for charities and community groups to succeed and flourish.

It would be easy to be overwhelmed faced with these challenges, especially for a small charity with limited resources. We must be focused on how we work and where we direct our attention. The strategic choices we make are informed by the insights we gather about the needs of London and Londoners. We have built and continue to develop expertise in gathering these insights, using the tools at our disposal. Our future strategy and work will be shaped by these.

There are four key building blocks to our work

Networks is the first building block. Networks make it easier for us to gather information from, provide support to, and connect charities and community groups across London. Some of our networks are for specific organisations, such as for [local charity infrastructure](#) groups in each London borough. Others address a particular topic – such as [social prescribing](#), the response to the Afghan refugee crisis in 2021, or the current [arrival of Ukrainian refugees in London](#).

Communications, the second building block, are needed to support charities and community groups. The voluntary and community sector in London is large and disparate. Good information and communications need to flow to the sector. We are investing increasing time, energy, and resources into reaching the sector. This includes using social media, [newsletters](#), [our website](#), as well as our networks and other channels. The importance and power of communications was demonstrated recently during the first phase of the Ukraine crisis when we rapidly assembled a document outlining how people could help, and this became the most used [resource on our website](#).

Connections is the third building block, which we use to support the sector across London. We have good links with policy makers in the GLA and London Councils, as well as funders. We have added further to these as we contribute to the agenda for London's recovery from the pandemic. Our networks give credibility to our voice and influence when we talk to policy makers and funders across London. Strong connections and credibility help us build understanding, partnerships, and develop solutions.

Data is the final building block of our work. Our networks help provide us with both hard as well as soft 'data'. There is less analysis and scrutiny of, and limited data about, the voluntary and community sector. We help plug this gap by gathering data from our networks and beyond. With this, we can better understand and serve the needs of the sector.

Armed with these building blocks, we can develop programmes that help us deliver on our mission, which is currently stated as "... taking a bold approach to turn data into insight, empowering civil society organisations through better connections and ensuring that our collective voice influences positive change."

Emergency responses

London Plus played an integral role during Covid, highlighting and coordinating the impressive efforts of London’s charities and community groups. As part of our response, we were co-opted into official structures hosted by the London Strategic Coordination Group, allowing us to channel important information to statutory bodies, policy makers and funders as well as across the sector.



One structure which we supported was the London Recovery Board, created to oversee nine “missions” developed to aid London’s recovery. London Plus helped to define these missions, advocating for charities and community groups, to increase the recognition and understanding of their value to Londoners. This helped lead to the creation of a mission on “[Building Strong Communities](#)”, on which we continue to work.

In the wake of our Covid response, we are well-placed within London’s emergency structures, and work closely with the [Voluntary and Community Sector Emergencies Partnership](#) (VCSEP). Members of VCSEP played a key role shaping London’s response to the Afghan evacuation in the summer of 2021 and, more recently, the arrival of Ukrainians. We have been integral to this, working with our network members, VCSEP partners and wider charity and community groups to share information and create a coordinated and effective response.

Our work on emergencies highlights the importance of open and accessible communications in fast-paced situations across London. The core principles we follow to ensure an effective response are that information channels must be open and easily accessible to the whole sector. To achieve this, we use a variety of tools such as zoom meetings, WhatsApp groups, Slack and email, and welcome the breadth of civil society to join and contribute. We will continue to develop this area of our work.

Our team and our working culture

We are a [small but dynamic team of eight staff](#). This allows us to be agile, flexible, and responsive. We can adapt quickly to the needs of the voluntary and community sector in London, or in response to requests for information and insights from policy makers. We will stay relatively small in the future – we need strong connections and networks to be effective, not a large team.

Clear communication is an important part of our approach as we must reach a range of audiences effectively. We work hard to try to get our language and comms right and aim for a culture of continuous improvement and honest reflection in this, as in all areas of our work.

The grant funding, we have received to date has enabled the agile and flexible way of working outlined above. This has been crucial as it allows us to respond promptly and adapt to events and emerging needs. Grants to pay for London Plus's work come mainly from [City Bridge Trust](#), our core funder, as well as the [GLA](#), and the [National Academy for Social Prescribing](#). An important part of our new strategy and work will be to diversify our funding but ensure we can maintain this flexibility.

The team has been working remotely since the start of the pandemic. We plan to continue this but are looking to take on some new office space later in 2022.

3. The role and responsibilities of the Chair

The role

- Provides leadership to the Board and ensures Trustees fulfil their duties and responsibilities for the proper governance of the charity.
- Builds relationships and works with our stakeholders and funders.
- Supports and, where appropriate, challenges the Chief Executive.
- Ensures that the Board as a whole works in positive partnership with the staff.
- Acts in the best interest of the charity, beneficiaries, and future beneficiaries at all times.

Key responsibilities

Trustee leadership

- Ensures that the Board agrees the vision, mission, strategy, and policies for the charity in line with its purpose and governing documents.
- Helps the Board make decisions in the best, long-term interests of the charity and that the Board takes collective ownership of these decisions.
- Runs Board meetings in an effective and efficient manner.
- Develops the knowledge and capabilities of the Trustees.
- Declares any personal conflict of interest while carrying out the duties of a Chair and deals with conflicts of interests within the Board.
- Supports the Board to work in partnership with staff.

Manage governance

Ensures:

- Major risks are reviewed, mitigated, and managed.
- The charity's financial dealings are systematically accounted for, audited and publicly available.
- The Board fulfils its duties to ensure the sound financial health of the charity, with systems in place to ensure financial accountability.
- The highest possible standards of governance are maintained and delivered.
- The annual report provides an accurate and informative statement about the charity's position and work.
- There are clear and open processes for the recruitment of the Chief Executive, as well as assessing and managing their performance.

Be an ambassador

- Acts as an ambassador for the charity.
- Works in partnership with the Chief Executive in representing the charity and acting as spokesperson to funders and stakeholders to help develop and achieve the charity's goals.
- Helps the Board and charity hear the voices and views of key stakeholders and communities across London, including policymakers and funders.
- Maintains close relationships with key funders and stakeholders.

Manage the Chief Executive

- Ensures the Chief Executive's performance is reviewed regularly and has the opportunity for professional development.
- Sets and reviews the remuneration package of the Chief Executive.

Person specification

We are looking for someone who lives in, or close to London and is familiar with other relevant organisations; statutory, independent, and voluntary.

In addition to the qualities required of a Trustee of the charity, the Chair must also meet the following requirements:

Personal qualities

- Empathy with the vision and values of London Plus.
- Ability to build good relationships including in an ambassadorial role.
- Ability to listen and effectively engage with colleagues demonstrating tact and diplomacy.
- Ability to foster and promote collaborative and effective teamwork.
- Ability to give the necessary time and effort to fulfil the duties as Chair.

Experience

- Experience of operating at a senior strategic leadership level within an organisation.
- Successful track record of achievement through their career.
- Experience of charity governance and working with or as part of a Board of Trustees.
- Experience of external representation, delivering presentations and managing stakeholders.
- Experience of chairing meetings and events.

Knowledge and skills

- Broad knowledge and understanding of the not-for-profit sector and current issues affecting it.
- Strong leadership skills and ability to motivate trustees and staff.
- Financial management expertise and a broad understanding of charity finance issues.
- Good understanding of risk management.
- Good understanding of charity governance issues.

4. Term of office, location & expenses

Terms of office and time commitment

We are looking for someone who can commit to an initial three-year period plus an option to extend for a further three years. There is an expected time commitment of approximately half a day per week.

Location

The chair does not have to live in London but needs to have a strong connection to the city and quick access, e.g. they work in London.

Expenses

The role does not receive any financial remuneration, although reasonable expenses may be claimed.

For a confidential conversation please contact Sarah Thewlis, Managing Director of Thewlis Graham Associates on 0207 850 4781 or email applications@thewlisgraham.com.

5. Timeline, application process and how to apply

Timeline

Dates	Activity
16 June 4PM	Applications close.
WC 20 June	Thewlis Graham consultant interviewing of interested candidates.
WC 11 July	Shortlisted candidates meet with the CEO and panel interviews.

Application process

Thewlis Graham Associates will acknowledge all applications. These will be assessed against the criteria in the role and responsibilities section and the people who best meet these will be invited for interview with Thewlis Graham Associates online.

Those candidates not invited to interview will be advised by email by end of June.

Longlisted candidates will be advised by email. After a consultation between London Plus and Thewlis Graham Associates a shortlist will be drawn up and shortlisted candidates invited for interview with the client. This could be either face to face or online.

How to apply

To apply for this role, please email in word format to applications@thewlisgraham.com the following documents quoting reference **Y0301**: –

1. A comprehensive CV.
2. A covering letter containing:
 - A personal statement which fully addresses the criteria listed in the role and responsibilities section.
 - provide answers to the following questions, illustrating your responses with examples or evidence from your own life experiences – these could be from your working, volunteering, community, or personal life:

- Why are you interested in joining London Plus specifically? (300 words)
 - How do you relate to our values? (300 words)
 - What knowledge, skills and experience have you gained in your life that you would bring to our Board? (500 words)
 - How would you make a difference to London Plus? (200 words)
- Your availability for the time commitment required.
 - The name, job title, organisation, email address and mobile number of two professional referees (Please note referees will not be approached without your prior permission).
3. We also ask that you complete a diversity and inclusion monitoring form, the link for which is in the next section.

Please ensure that you include your mobile phone number and email address in your application. Do not hesitate to contact Claire Drummond on 020 7850 4781 if you have any queries. Additionally, if you would prefer to receive this candidate brief in a more accessible format, please contact us.

6. Diversity and inclusion monitoring

Diversity and inclusion monitoring is independent of the recruitment process but please do complete your form. Thewlis Graham Associates is committed to monitoring and analysing diversity and inclusion information. This is so that we can ensure that our processes are fair, transparent, promote equality of opportunity for all, and do not have an adverse impact on any particular group.

The link to this form is here: [click here](#). If you have any problems with this, please contact Tracey on: tct@thewlisgraham.com.

Any information provided on this form will be treated as strictly confidential and will be used for statistical purposes only. It will not be seen by anybody directly involved in the selection process. No information will be published or used in any way which allows any individual to be identified.

Thank you.

8. Advert

London Plus Chair

Voluntary role London

London Plus supports and champions charities and community groups in London. It does this through networks, data, communications, and connections across the capital. Set up in its current form in 2019, London Plus found its feet, and demonstrated its purpose and value, in the pandemic and is now building on this work to support the breadth of charities and community groups across London.

We are looking for a Chair to support London Plus as we develop and implement a new strategy. This strategy will draw on the experiences and lessons of the pandemic as well as becoming increasingly effective at the details of how to develop and support networks. It will refine the existing narrative and story for the charity and, importantly, look to develop its funding model further to ensure long-term sustainability.

Our ideal chair would be someone who lives in, or close to London and is familiar with other relevant organisations; statutory, independent, and voluntary.

Key Responsibilities:

- Provides leadership to the Board and ensures Trustees fulfil their duties and responsibilities for the proper governance of the charity.
- Builds relationships and works with our stakeholders and funders.
- Supports and, where appropriate, challenges the Chief Executive.
- Ensures that the Board as a whole works in positive partnership with the staff.
- Acts in the best interest of the charity, beneficiaries, and future beneficiaries at all times.

The Requirements:

- Experience of operating at a senior strategic leadership level within an organisation.
- Passion and commitment to the charity and its strategic objectives.
- Ability to build good relationships including in an ambassadorial role.
- Broad knowledge and understanding of the not-for-profit sector and current issues affecting it.
- Strong leadership skills and ability to motivate trustees and staff.
- Financial management expertise and a broad understanding of charity finance.

Please apply by visiting www.thewlisgraham.com/assignment-briefings and following the instructions in the candidate brief quoting reference Y0301. The closing date is 4pm on 16 June 2022.

For a confidential conversation with Sarah Thewlis or for any other information please email applications@thewlisgraham.com

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