



Meeting the needs and promoting  
the rights of women who have  
experienced domestic abuse

## Board of Trustees

### Members Application form

**A Full Board members pack can be made available**

#### Introduction:

Thank you for expressing an interest in the Board of Trustees for Independent Choices.

We are an Industrial and Provident society and operate with a Voluntary Board of trustees, we currently employ nine (Ten) paid staff, a Chief Officer, two Service managers and five direct support staff and two part time administration staff.

We are interested to receive application throughout the year but will only manage a full Board of Trustees members' recruitment once per annum. Recruitment will be made onto the board based on the organisational requirements.

We have a full Board Members pack that we can provide, which should contain all the information you require, if you would like to further information please request this by emailing [chair@independentchoices.org.uk](mailto:chair@independentchoices.org.uk). If you are interested to apply please complete the four page application form below in full and return as detailed

#### Background Information

Independent Choices was founded in 1978 as the Women's Domestic Violence Helpline. Our services developed in the mid 1990's into a multi-project organisation.

The focus of the work of the organisation includes the services of the Women's Helpline including Community Language Helpline Services receiving just under 8,000 calls each year and the Women's Safety Service delivered under contract to Greater Manchester Probation Trust (GMPT). Further details can be found on our website [www.wdvh.org.uk](http://www.wdvh.org.uk)

#### Women's Domestic Abuse Helpline (WDAH)

The Women's Domestic Abuse Helpline (formerly Women's Domestic Violence Helpline- WDVH) has been in operation across the North west since 1978 and last year celebrated the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

The Helpline is run by a full time Service manager and part-time community language worker. They work with the dedicated support of over 25 trained volunteer's year. Our service offers support directly to women who are experiencing or have experienced domestic abuse or whose children are being abused. WDAH can offer advice, information telephone counselling and support to any woman that is being abused or has been abused by someone they are having a relationship with, or have formerly had a relationship with. This includes partners, ex-partners and family members and women in same sex relationship.

We can act as a referral point for refuges, safe houses and other agencies that assist women. The Helpline can access refuge provision for women across the UK through the Women's Aid network of refuges. We can signpost women to relevant local agencies such as solicitors and outreach workers and support groups. The Women's Domestic Abuse Helpline (WDAH) receives an average of 8,000 calls a year from women and agencies that assist women. Of these calls over 1000 of these calls are from, or are regarding women from the South Asian Community

WDAH receives core funding for the Helpline service from Manchester City Council via Manchester Advice and crime and disorder and also receives a grant from AGMA. This funding allows WDAH to operate a Confidential Helpline service for 30 hours including 12 hours of Community Helpline Language Service.

### **Women's Safety Service**

This service is contracted from Independent Choices by Greater Manchester Probation Trust. It is a confidential service that provides women victims and current partners of men undertaking the Integrated Domestic Abuse Programme (IDAP) with information and support, safety planning and referral to other agencies for support.

The service provides women with realistic information about the Men's IDAP, including what they can expect to happen and updated information about men's attendance on the programme.

The Team of 3.5 Women's Safety Workers is supported by a Services Manager and part time administrator. All Staff are inducted into programme methods and receive ongoing training to support the quality of the service for women. The team follows best practice with regard to partnership working and multi agency risk assessment standards across the ten Greater Manchester Boroughs. Further details on the Women's Safety Service can be found in the leaflet for service users and Independent Choices Annual Review.

### **Funding and Resources**

All the services are based together in a Community Resource centre, where we have three offices, the centre is situated just over a mile from Manchester city centre. Board meetings most regularly occur at the central office base. As well as the paid staff team we have up to 20 Volunteers at any one time. Our Core funding currently is provided by Manchester city council through Manchester advice and Crime and Disorder. We also get funding from AGMA. As previously stated we are contracted by Greater Manchester Probation Trust to run the Women's Safety Service.

## **Responsibilities of a Board member**

- Accept legal responsibility for the workers of the organisation;
- Act as employers for the workers of the organisation;
- Decide overall policy for the organisation's work within the guidelines laid down by the members;
- Be satisfied that within the constraints of resources, the organisation is meeting its aims;
- Take a long term view of how the work of the organisation should develop;
- To strive towards ensuring that funding for the organisation continues and meet presenting need.
- Ensure that all Board of Trustee responsibilities delegated to paid staff and individual members of the organisation are carried out.

## **Summary of Board Recruitment Process**

- 1) Potential or interested new Board members will be invited to fill in an application form
- 2) Potential new Board members will be invited to: meet with the Senior Staff/Chair of Committee; shadow a Committee meeting, as appropriate
- 3) The Board shall consider applications at a Committee meeting and co-opt any new member as directed in the Society's Rules. This will occur at least once per annum.
- 4) All Board Members shall hold office until the end of the next Annual General Meeting where they may stand for re-election.

## Independent Choices

**The following is an Extract of Business plan April 2008- March 2011**

*The Business Plan will be made available at Induction.*

### Our Vision

All women and their dependents are made aware of their rights and offered choices so that they can live without the fear of domestic abuse.

### Mission Statement

Independent Choices meets the needs and promotes the rights of women who have experienced domestic abuse.

### Organisational Objectives

- Provide confidential, independent, accurate, up to date advice and information services.
- Provide services and facilitate projects that will empower and enable women to make informed choices.
- Ensure that service users and their dependents needs remain central to all service and projects through consistent consultation, monitoring, feedback and dialogue.
- Actively promote the work of the organisation to raise awareness of domestic abuse, its impact and associated issues.
- Create and participate in networks and partnerships to develop a range of domestic abuse services for women and their dependents.
- Challenge poor practice in domestic abuse services and work to educate and raise awareness of appropriate responses.
- Actively work with volunteers to enhance and develop the services and project for women and their dependents.
- Monitor and evaluate the organisation's work

### Independent choices Values

- 1) To provide and facilitate safe services for women by women.
- 2) To work in a way that acknowledges women's unequal position in society and cultures.
- 3) To ensure that women are made aware of their rights and offered choices.
- 4) To be an independent voluntary organisation that promotes best practice and encourages accountability for women's safety.
- 5) To work with women in a non-judgmental way that promotes and respects diversity and aims to make services accessible.
- 6) To work in partnership with other organisations to provide better services for women

If you are interested to apply please complete the four page application form in full and return as detailed

## Independent Choices Application form for joining the Board of Trustees

Please complete each section, writing clearly and return the form in the pre-paid envelope to:

Board of Trustees Recruitment c/o Chief Officer

PO Box 390

Manchester

M16 7WE

Email a scanned copy to [chair@independentchoices.org](mailto:chair@independentchoices.org)

Fax to 0161 636 7527

<b>Name:</b>			
<b>Address:</b>			
<b>Post code:</b>			
<b>Telephone Day:</b>		<b>Evening:</b>	
<b>Mobile:</b>		<b>Email:</b>	
<b>Preferred contact time and other information you would like us to consider:</b>			

If you need any assistance filling out this form or have any queries please contact Sam Priestley on 0161 636 7534.

**1) Why are you interested in the Board of Trustees of Independent Choices?**

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**2) What contact, if any, have you had with Independent Choices: - Women's Domestic Abuse Helpline (WDAH)/Women's Safety Service (WSS)?**

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**3) Do you have any interest in, or experience of women's issues?**

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**4) What is your understanding of domestic abuse and why it happens?**

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**5) Have you ever worked/volunteered in a women only organisation? How do you feel about this?**

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**6) Are you a member of any organisation or lobbying group? If so please state name of organisation/group.**

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**7) Are you employed? If so what is your job title and who are you employed by?**

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**8) Do you volunteer for another organisation? If so please state.**

Please also add if you feel there maybe any conflict of interest.

**9) Have you ever volunteered for other organisations, if so which ones and when?**

**10) What skills do you have, that you think will be useful to the management of the WDAH & WSS?**

**11) Which areas / roles of the Board would you have a particular interest in?**

Chairing		Fundraising	
Secretary / administration/ written reports		Promotion and events	
Finance / treasurer		Strategy and planning	
Human resources and Policies		Legal and membership	

**12) Are there any areas that you feel strongly about and which we should be aware of?**

Because of the nature of the work we do it is important that we ask for character references. Could you please supply the names, addresses and telephone numbers of two people who will give a character reference for you. Please write clearly - filling in all the details requested.

Reference 1:	Reference 2:
Name:	Name:
Address:	Address:
Post code:	Post code:
Telephone:	Telephone:
In what capacity do you know this person?	In what capacity do you know this person?

Are there any special requirements that you would need in order to join and participate fully in the Management Group?

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**✕Please note that Independent Choices pays travel and child minding expenses, which relate to you attending Independent Choices business.**

To be a member of the Independent Choices Board of Trustees you will be expected to commit to a minimum of a bi-monthly meeting and one sub group. These may be held early evening or at weekends and will last for approximately two hours.

Signed	Date
<b>Thank you for taking the time to complete the form</b>	