

Statement in support of UKCP trustee nomination

Georgina Beadon Ekers

I am currently a Senior Psychotherapist in the NHS, working in Adult Community Psychology alongside various other practitioners. I have worked in many different organisations as a psychotherapist working alongside other types of psychotherapists. For example, in my last role I was the contact between a staff support hub at the NHS and six different NHS talking therapies (IAPT) providers. I'm familiar with other professional associations and regulatory frameworks, having previously been a member of the BACP. I've also taught counselling and psychotherapy at degree level including a module on Counselling Ethics which covered various ethical and regulatory frameworks. As a trainer in this area for 12 years, I'm dedicated to promoting high standards within education, training and practice in our professions.

I have been a chair of trustees for a charitable organisation which involved the usual duties in addition to hiring a new CEO, moving the organisation to be a new legal entity, as well as representing the organisation at an employment tribunal. These experiences have given me first-hand insight into the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship. I have worked in and volunteered in another five charities where I raised funding, developed strategy and objectives, and led organisational restructure.

I'm committed to promoting the art and science of psychotherapy and counselling for the benefit of the public. I have founded and facilitate a national monthly community of practice for over 150 people interested in trauma informed systems which is working on creating an ask of national government for all public services to become trauma informed in England. Developing and disseminating research is key to raising awareness of the impact of counselling and psychotherapy creating better parity between our professions and, for example, psychology.

I recently applied to be an NIHR [National Institute for Health and Care Research] early career researcher as this is an area I am deeply passionate about. As someone who is a psychotherapist in a psychology dominant area, I'm well aware of the need for more psychotherapy and psychotherapeutic counselling to be on offer to the public to ensure people are given as much choice about their care as possible.

I've worked and volunteered privately as a psychotherapist so understand the unique issues that private practitioners face, such as access to peer support, competition with those who have not had adequate training and the nuances of remote sessions.

I have board level experience in the public and third sector. These roles have required excellent communication skills, both written and verbal. They involved stakeholder engagement where I would bring people with lived experience, those working in the NHS and the third sector together to coproduce strategy and operations for what was uniquely needed for our local area in order for it to thrive. Stakeholder engagement requires influencing people with different organisational cultures and objectives to think differently and to remain open to different ways of working. At times I needed to speak my mind and judge when to explicitly navigate the complex and sensitive issues that would arise from unhelpful cultural dynamics. I then needed to deliver potentially challenging information in a way that will be received as helpfully as possible. I would work to help address ruptured relationships between organisations using tact,

diplomacy and empathy in group meetings and joint strategy development, to ensure better joint working and better care for the people that we served.

When I was chair of trustees, there was a serious allegation of disability discrimination made by a member of staff about the organisation. I needed to remain impartial, fair and to respect various confidences in dealing with this serious matter, including an employment tribunal. As a disabled person, I had to remain aware of my own experiences and how this could influence the situation, and remain as objective as I could and accountable for decisions made. I worked with the rest of the trustees to ensure that all decisions were shared and as fair as possible.

I have a commitment to Nolan's seven principles of public life, having dedicated both my private life and career to serving others and trying to alleviate suffering as much as possible and trying to do this with as much authenticity as I can. I've managed the volunteer workforce across many roles. At a local Mind we had 25 volunteers, and 15 were training or developing their practice in psychotherapy and counselling. My current role is about celebrating the great work that is already going on. Recognising the skills, experience and passion of my colleagues is fundamental to bolstering morale and setting a foundation for a positive working culture. I try to demonstrate integrity, openness and honesty by walking the walk and not just talking the talk. I aim to provide a trauma-informed, person-centred environment for the people that I work with which requires me to be trauma informed in the way that I engage with people.

In my current role, I'm an Equality Champion at my work. I feel passionately about equity, diversity, inclusion, belonging, intersectionality and diversity, and worked as a manager in the Equity Improvement Department at National Mind previously. I currently facilitate a monthly group that I founded after the recent racist riots to support any staff and volunteers in our area affected by racism or religious intolerance. I also developed a mental health inequalities commissioning stream in a previous role to ensure that underrepresented groups could have bespoke services developed to support them with their mental health, for the Roma and Gypsy traveller population in our area, our BIPOC population and specific strategic sex worker outreach.

I have sufficient time to fulfil the demands of this role and a willingness to be available for advice and enquiries as and when needed. I have no obvious conflicts of interest as my only other existing role is as a therapist within the NHS. I am more than proficient with Microsoft Office and online and hybrid meetings, utilising things like MS teams and Zoom.