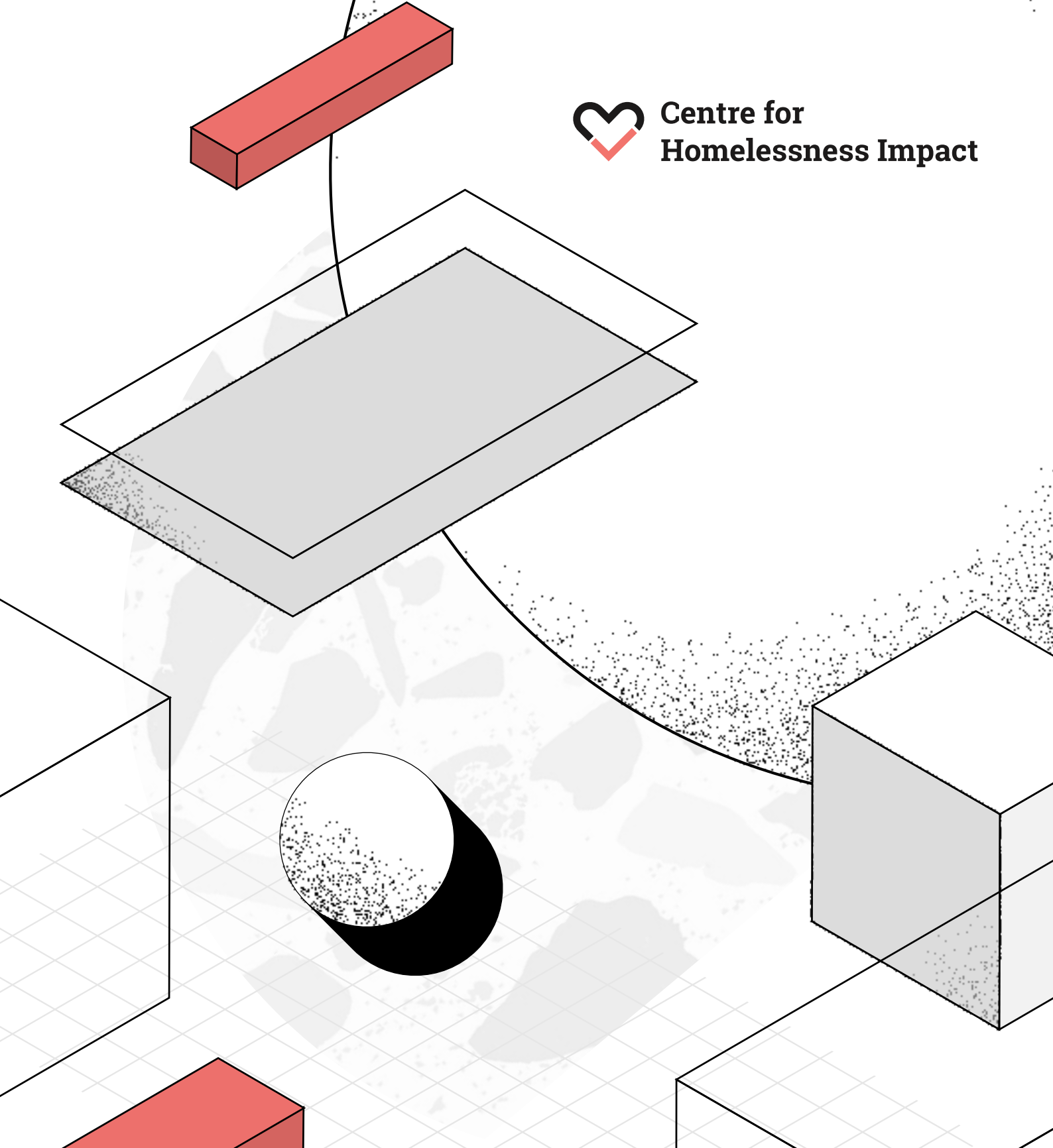




**Centre for
Homelessness Impact**



Recruitment of Board Members

October 2020



Letter from the Chair

Thanks for your interest in joining the Centre for Homelessness Impact.

I joined the Centre two years ago because I think we have a real chance to make an impact on the underlying challenge – to achieve not just a temporary reverse in the number of people on the streets, but a permanent shift in homelessness overall. Clearly the Covid-19 crisis has changed the context, and we don't yet know the full implications for homelessness. What remains clear is that homelessness will only be ended for good if change is system-wide, and based on evidence of what really works.

That's the role of the Centre for Homelessness Impact. We will act as a catalyst for change in three ways: Building the evidence base, Supporting implementation, and Mobilising change makers. We work alongside other organisations, public and third sector, central and local, frontline and academic, to help deliver the lasting change we want to see.

In less than two years, our team have made good progress on all three goals. Existing evidence has been mapped with the gaps identified, and we have published our first systematic review and commissioned our first randomised controlled trial. On the implementation side, three local authorities have taken part in pilot schemes, working with multi-disciplinary support from us to use evidence better to tackle local challenges, and speak very positively of the results. And this summer, we replaced in-person conferences with a five week Impact Festival of online events. At the same time, we are working with councils on how evidence can support the response to the Covid pandemic.

The role of the board is crucial in all this, to support and guide the team, to act as ambassadors for the organisation, and to ensure we deliver on our mission. To complement the skills and perspectives of the existing board members, we are now looking to recruit another two people. One will be a senior leader running or commissioning local services. We are more open about the other post, but are particularly interested to hear from people with experience of looking at how activity translates into impact.

If you would like to help shape and drive an organisation which is starting to make a real impact on one of the major challenges of our time, we'd be delighted to hear from you.

Andrew Hudson
October 2020



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About the Centre

The Centre was set up in 2018, in response to the need for an independent voice to champion the better use of rigorous evidence in preventing and tackling homelessness in its widest sense, going well beyond rough sleeping. The work therefore involves both policy and practice, and working with a range of other organisations and perspectives: we will only achieve our goals by drawing on the expertise both of academics and of people with lived experience of homelessness themselves, and by securing change in both policy and practice across a range of services, ie not just the “homelessness sector” itself.

The Centre has a team of 12 staff (some part-time), led by the Chief Executive, Dr Lígia Teixeira. Much of the work is done through associates and in collaboration with a large number of partner organisations. We are very fortunate in having philanthropic funding for the first five years of operation, and are looking to build on this to extend the work we can do.

Vision, Mission and Values

The Centre’s vision is to create “A society in which any experience of homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurrent.”

Our distinctive role in helping to achieve this vision is “to be a catalyst for evidence-led change to achieve better results.”

Our values are:

- Start with the person
- Focus on impact
- Design for action
- Be rigorous
- Collaborate.

Our view of the overall approach needed across society to end homelessness for good is set out in the SHARE framework:

- Smart policy
- Housing system
- All in it together
- Relational
- Ecosystem of services.



Priorities for the Centre

The Centre plans to do three kinds of work to deliver its mission.

Building a stronger evidence base

This involves building the evidence base for what works in what context. An early priority for the Centre was to gather together existing evidence, synthesise the messages, and assess how robust the findings are. The Centre published two Evidence and Gap Maps, showing what work has been done so far, and an Intervention Tool, which summarises the evidence on different topics (e.g. Housing First, or hostels), and gives simple ratings for strength of evidence, cost-effectiveness and impact.

This work provided a foundation for identifying gaps in the evidence, and working out how to fill them, and for wider work to help improve the reliability of evidence. We have recently published our first systematic review of the evidence on how to improve discharge from institutions, with a couple more to come soon, and have commissioned our first RCT on aspects of landlord behaviour.

Supporting implementation

The work here is about supporting policy makers and practitioners to make use of the evidence in practice. We are currently putting together a programme to work with up to 30 local authorities on how to use evidence to tackle particular challenges: this is a collaborative effort with the Behavioural Insights Team, data specialists from Johns Hopkins University, and systems design experts from IDEO.

Mobilising change makers

More generally, we aim to build a movement towards using data and evidence, by working with individuals and organisations to drive systemic change and grow a learning culture. The Centre published a book, *Using Evidence to end Homelessness* in April, with contributions from a range of experts on different aspects of this challenge. This was followed by the five week online Impact Festival in the summer which had over 50 sessions and 150 speakers, with input from people with lived experience, along with practitioners, academics and government ministers. 1300 people accessed these events.

More details of all the work, including highlights of the Impact Festival, are on the website, <https://www.homelessnessimpact.org/>.

The role of the board

The main role of the board is the classic one of governance: to set the strategy for the organisation, to monitor progress in delivering this, to oversee financial management and risk management, to make sure that the Centre complies with all legal and ethical standards, and to oversee accountability to the wide range of stakeholders.

Constitutionally, the Centre is both an independent company and a registered charity in England and Scotland, so board members will be both directors of the company and trustees of the charity. The board meets five times a year, but as with most small organisations, it is very helpful for members to get involved in other ways: this can include acting as a sounding board for staff in between meetings, building links with other organisations and key people, chairing groups or events, and providing expertise on particular issues. We appreciate that time is scarce, so aim to plan well ahead in asking for extra involvement. Meetings have moved to Zoom during the pandemic, and post-pandemic there will continue to be opportunities to dial in, but we do see value in meeting face-to-face wherever possible.

The profiles of current board members are on the website: <https://www.homelessnessimpact.org/people>.



Role description for new board members

We are looking for board members with the following qualities:

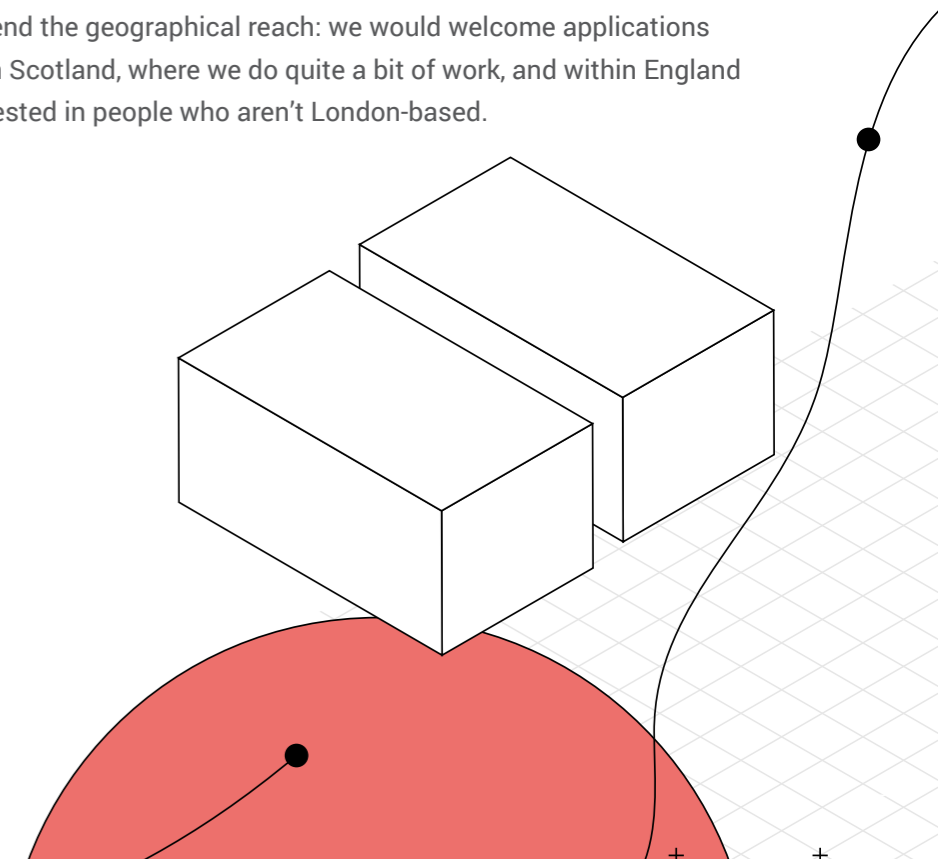
- passion and commitment to the strategic objectives and cause of the Centre;
- ability to devote sufficient time and effort to the charity, including travel and attending events out of office hours;
- influence and networks within your sector or field and willingness to leverage this for the charity;
- sound, independent judgement;
- experience of working as part of a team;
- commitment to the importance of high quality research and its application to policy and practice;
- understanding of charity governance and of the duties of a charity trustee (see “The Essential Trustee” from the Charity Commission, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-essential-trustee-what-you-need-to-know-cc3/the-essential-trustee-what-you-need-to-know-what-you-need-to-do>).

To complement the skills and experience already on the board, we are looking particularly for members with the following attributes:

- For one role, we want to appoint a current senior leader in work related to homelessness in a local authority – this could be a role in the prevention and addressing of homelessness itself, or in housing or social care or a related service, as a commissioner or in delivery.
- For the other role, we are more open about the background. We want to ensure we are strong at assessing how our activity translates into impact on the ground. So someone with experience of looking constructively and rigorously at performance and impact would be valuable – this might be someone with a background in finance or analysis or operations, but technical skills matter less than mindset.

In addition, we are keen to strengthen the diversity of the board in a number of ways, to ensure we have as wide a range of perspectives as possible to make for better decisions:

- We encourage applications from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) candidates, as these groups are currently underrepresented on the board;
- The same applies to people who have experience of housing insecurity;
- We would like to extend the geographical reach: we would welcome applications from people based in Scotland, where we do quite a bit of work, and within England are particularly interested in people who aren't London-based.





Practical points

Board members will be initially appointed for a three year term, with the possibility of extension for another three years. The roles are unpaid, but reasonable expenses will be covered.

The board holds five formal meetings a year, mostly for 2-3 hours each, including one awayday. So far these have been in London, Glasgow, and Edinburgh, but could be in other locations. The dates for 2021 are:

- 19th February (awayday)
- Late April/early May tbc
- 23rd July
- 24th September
- 16th December

We will work out locations once it's clearer whether face-to-face meetings will be possible. On-screen meetings have started at 9.30am; face-to-face meetings started at about 11am to allow for travel.

As well as time for meetings, we suggest board members reckon on about a day a month for other work for the Centre, e.g. for specific meetings, email discussions, or supporting staff on particular topics.

Tailored induction programmes will be provided for all new members.

How to apply

If you would like an informal discussion with the Chair, Andrew Hudson, please contact him via careers@homelessnessimpact.org.

To apply formally, please send your CV and a supporting statement of no more than two pages, explaining why you are interested in the role, and what you would bring, both in terms of general skills and the specific points mentioned above. Please also let us have the names of two referees, though we will not contact them until after the panel interviews. All this should be sent to careers@homelessnessimpact.org.

The closing date for these applications is midday on 3rd November. There will be interviews with the Chair and a panel of board members and staff in mid-November (we plan for slots on 10th, 17th, and 19th). Depending on the number of applications, we may have some telephone conversations before the final panel.

