

Recruitment Pack

Clinician Trustee



Introduction from the Chief Executive

Dear Candidate,

Hello, I'm Claire. I'm the Chief Executive of CLAPA, the UK charity for people affected by cleft lip and palate. I want to tell you about this unique opportunity to join an incredible charity that has supported, connected and empowered people affected by cleft in the UK for over 45 years. I'd like to thank you for your interest in this new and vital role.

We are currently looking for a new Clinician Trustee who can use their expertise and strategic insight to support our growing charity at a critical time for cleft care and NHS reform. We are particularly keen to hear from senior clinicians involved in cleft leadership, commissioning, service development or workforce planning, who can help shape our influencing work and ensure the voices of people affected by cleft are heard at the highest levels. We need someone who thrives as part of a dynamic group of Trustees, is willing to champion the charity, and values seeing the immediate and lasting impact their work can make. If you think you have the experience, passion and leadership to help us meet the needs of the community we serve, we want to hear from you.

Please read on to find the Role Description and Person Specification along with more information about our organisation and details of how to apply. We look forward to receiving your application.

Claire Cunniffe
Chief Executive



A message from our outgoing Clinician Trustee

Working as a Clinical Trustee for CLAPA has been a fantastic experience. All the staff and trustees are incredibly dedicated to their work and the impact on those seeking CLAPA's service is clear.

CLAPA has made significant progress in a number of domains since I started, including their most recent brand refresh and campaigning work. With the current changes and challenges in the NHS I am sure CLAPA will remain dedicated advocates to those affected by cleft.

I would urge anyone with a passion for cleft to apply for this rewarding role.

Jane Kerby
Former Clinician Trustee



CLAPA is **committed to safeguarding** and ensuring the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk, and expects all employees and volunteers to share this commitment. **The suitability of all prospective employees or volunteers will be assessed during the recruitment process in line with this commitment.**

CLAPA is committed to creating a diverse and inclusive environment, and **we welcome applicants from all backgrounds and walks of life.** If you share our values and are passionate about supporting the UK cleft community, we want to hear from you. Our small office is in London, but we have staff and volunteers across the UK. So whether you're down in Cornwall, up in the Scottish highlands, in the Cardiff suburbs or Belfast Central, you'll find a place in our team.

Clinician Trustee (Volunteer)

Role Description

The Board of Trustees is responsible for the overall governance and strategic direction of the charity, developing CLAPA's aims, objectives and goals in accordance with the governing document, legal and regulatory guidelines. You would be joining our board at an exciting time, as we continue to implement our 5-year strategy for 2025-2030.

The Clinician Trustee will contribute to all aspects of the charity's governance while providing essential clinical expertise to support and enhance our work. We are seeking an experienced professional to help drive CLAPA's clinical impact in line with its strategic priorities.

We are particularly interested in hearing from clinicians with experience of strategic leadership within cleft services, specialised commissioning, workforce development or national clinical networks, who can help CLAPA navigate a period of significant change and reform across the NHS.

In this role, you will offer insight into the patient journey across the evolving cleft care pathway, strengthen relationships between CLAPA and clinical teams and provide clinical guidance to inform our campaigns and initiatives. You will bring a strong understanding of patient centred care and use your expertise to help shape and influence improvements in services and outcomes.

Ideally, you will also draw on safeguarding experience from your clinical role to support the charity's safeguarding function and promote best practice across our work.



Key Tasks

The Clinician Trustee will be expected to:

- Use their clinical experience within cleft services to effectively assist the Board in developing the charity's strategies and services.
- Help CLAPA reach the next stage of its journey, with the clinical skills, knowledge and expertise to help drive the organisation forward.

The duties of the Trustee board are to:

- Ensure CLAPA complies with its constitution, charity and company law, and all relevant regulations
- Ensure that CLAPA pursues its objects as defined in its governing document
- Ensure CLAPA applies its resources exclusively in pursuance of its objects, i.e. it must not spend money on activities which are not included in its own objects, no matter how worthwhile or charitable those organisations are
- Contribute actively to the board in giving firm strategic direction to CLAPA, setting overall policy, defining goals, setting targets and evaluating performance
- Attend Board meetings, adequately prepared to contribute to discussions and adhere to the Trustee Code of Conduct. Use independent judgment, acting legally and in good faith to promote and protect
- Occasionally attend occasional CLAPA events (online or in-person) to understand services and represent the organisation.
- Respond to occasional queries from the wider CLAPA team (with SMT approval) to inform service delivery and decision making
- Commit sufficient time to trustee duties and remain responsive between meetings.
- Ensure CLAPA complies with relevant Safeguarding and Health & Safety legislation and participate in internal committee meetings as required
- Complete a relevant level DBS check in line with CLAPA policy and join the DBS update service
- Safeguard the good name and values of CLAPA
- Ensure the effective and efficient administration of CLAPA
- Protect and manage the property of CLAPA and ensure the proper investment of CLAPA's funds
- Promote CLAPA's aims using your skills, expertise, and networks.
- Appoint the Chief Executive and monitor their performance
- Willingness and ability to understand and accept their responsibilities and liabilities as Trustees and to act in the best interests of the organisation.

Person specification

Essential

- Clinical experience within an NHS Cleft Team
- Passionate about CLAPA's mission to support people to take control of their cleft journeys, connect with others, and use their voices to impact the future of care.
- Knowledge and understanding of cleft lip and palate and its impact on people born with a cleft and their families
- Strong communication skills and excellent leadership skills along with a willingness to challenge the status quo.
- Ability to work effectively as a member of a team as well as independently.
- Integrity, good independent judgment and analytical/ evaluation skills.
- A commitment to CLAPA and willingness to devote the necessary time and effort to the charity, and to act as the charity's ambassador to external bodies, charities and companies.
- Competent use of IT skills
- Understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship.

Desirable

- Currently a Clinical Lead/Director of a cleft service or the Chair of a CEN.
- Experience of strategic leadership within cleft services, specialised commissioning or national clinical networks
- Understanding of the current challenges facing cleft services, including workforce sustainability, NHS reform and service development.
- Previous experience of influencing and developing an organisational strategy
- Experience and knowledge of voluntary sector organisations
- Knowledge and experience of co-production
- Experience of leading on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at a senior level

Terms of Office

1. Trustees will normally hold office for two three-year terms.
2. Usually, a maximum of two terms can be served.
3. This is a voluntary position.

About Cleft lip and palate

Early in pregnancy, different parts of the face form and come together just above the top lip. If this doesn't happen quite as it should, the result is a gap or 'cleft' in the upper lip, the palate (roof of the mouth), or both. It's usually caused by a mix of genetic and environmental factors interacting in a way that can't be predicted or prevented. A cleft can affect feeding, hearing, speech, teeth placement and more. The treatment pathway can last 20+ years, including several surgeries.

Around one in 700 people are born with a cleft – that's 1,200 each year in the UK alone.

About CLAPA

Cleft Lip and Palate Action (CLAPA) is the UK's cleft lip and palate support charity. We bring together people affected by cleft to help them connect with others who share their experiences, welcoming them into a supportive community for life.



CLAPA's services

- Vibrant social media channels which promote positivity, bust myths and celebrate differences.
- Online support groups moderated by trained volunteers provide an instant connection for those looking for an informal support network.
- Regular online events give people the chance to talk about their experiences and worries and hear from others at all stages of the cleft journey.
- Confidential one-to-one support provided by trained volunteer patients and parents who reassure those most in need that they can cope with whatever lies ahead.
- Information on cleft led by our community, reflecting their experiences and emotional needs as well as medical facts.
- Counselling to enable those feeling overwhelmed, anxious, or depressed to work on any issues in their lives.
- Support and signposting for those with those with complex enquiries.

CLAPA's services

- A Children and Young People's Council and several targeted focus groups who meet to share their thoughts and experiences, helping to improve our support services as well as cleft research and NHS care.
- Mentoring to help young people address cleft-related challenges and develop coping and communication skills.
- Camp CLAPA adventure weekends, a Penpals project and other opportunities for children and young people to connect and improve mental health and wellbeing.
- A consultancy service for researchers and health professionals which connects their work with our community and enables Patient and Public Involvement (PPI).
- A feeding service that supplies 15,000 subsidised items of specialist equipment for babies born with a cleft each year, including free of charge items for new and vulnerable families.

CLAPA's values

Inclusive

Everyone affected by cleft in the UK, regardless of background, identity or socioeconomic status, should be able to find a warm and welcoming community with CLAPA. We value all voices and want everyone to see themselves reflected in our work.

Trusted

We passionately believe in doing what is best for the UK cleft community. Their needs and voices are at the front and centre of everything we do. We take responsibility for our mistakes and use them as chances to learn.

Adaptable

We seek authentic feedback to help us raise the bar in everything we do. We don't stay stuck in our ways. We follow the evidence, try new things, and change with the times.

Collaborative

We work best when we work together, whether this is as a staff team, as a community, or in partnership with others.



CLAPA's strategy

CLAPA's 2025–2030 strategy aims to provide comprehensive support for people affected by cleft lip and palate, ensuring no one goes through their journey alone.

We continue to deliver vital services like the feeding service, peer support, counselling, and Cleft++ Mentoring, while expanding our digital offerings for greater accessibility. Our core focus is on Investing in our people and infrastructure, Empowering the cleft community to have a voice in care, and Informing through accessible resources. Additionally, we Connect individuals through community-building and Reassure them with personalised support.

We are also embarking on a new era of campaigning and advocacy to influence cleft care policy, supported by a refreshed brand and a new website. With an enhanced income generation strategy, we seek to forge lasting partnerships with donors, corporations, and supporters to drive forward these ambitious goals.

The role of a Trustee

CLAPA is led by Senior Leadership Team and Chief Executive who report to the Board of Trustees (the majority of whom have a personal connection to cleft lip and palate), and has a constructive, collaborative culture where all voices and contributions are valued. CLAPA encourages cross-team working to give staff a chance to test their skills and learn about every area of how a modern charity operates.

The Board currently meets 8 times per year with all meetings being held via Teams on a weekday evening, the exception being the Trustees Awayday which is a daytime meeting every autumn held at the CLAPA office in London.

There is more information on the role of a Trustee on the [Charity Commission Guidance](#) website

CLAPA is committed to supporting new Trustees and will provide a thorough induction once appointed, and access to ongoing training as required.



How to apply

Apply for this role via our [CHARITY JOB APPLICATION FORM](#). This link will direct you to an external website to complete your application.

You may request an application form in another format by emailing info@clapa.com with 'Clinician Trustee Recruitment Pack Request' in the subject.

All applications are subject to our shortlisting process. If you're shortlisted, we will contact you and invite you to attend an interview. We'll also tell you if there will be any skills tasks to complete as part of the recruitment process. We will also ask you to complete a Criminal Record Disclosure form (see below).

If you have not heard from us by 21st October, please assume your application has been unsuccessful. We regret that due to our small team, we are unable to give feedback on unsuccessful applications.

Applications close: 9am on Monday 5th October 2026

Interviews: Between 19th – 21st October 2026

Start date: As soon as possible – To be agreed

If the interview or start dates will be an issue for you because of religious festivals or other key dates, we will make every effort to accommodate this. Please get in touch to discuss your requirements.

Criminal Record Background Checks

All Trustee roles are subject to an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. You will be required to complete a relevant level DBS check in line with CLAPA policy and join the DBS update service.

If you are invited for an interview, you will be sent a Criminal Record Declaration form. You will need to complete this form prior to the interview, but it will be stored securely and will only be looked at if your application is successful. If you have declared that you have a criminal record on this form, we will complete a risk assessment process in line with our Safeguarding Policies.



Contact

Contact Claire Cunniffe, Chief Executive at claire.cunniffe@clapa.com, if you have any questions about the role or the application process.

You can also call the CLAPA Office on 020 7833 4883. Due to most of our staff being home-based and part-time, there is usually limited cover, but if you leave a message on the answerphone, we will call you back

Thank you for your interest

   @clapacommunity

 clapa.com

 020 7833 4883

 The Green House, 244-254 Cambridge Heath Road, LONDON E2 9DA

Cleft Lip and Palate Action (CLAPA) is the operating name of Cleft Lip and Palate Association, a registered Charity in England and Wales (1108160) and Scotland (SC041034), which is a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales (5206298).

