

# designability

## Chair of Board of Trustees

### Candidate Information Pack

The charity that enables disabled people to live with greater independence



## Designability Seeks a New Chair

In this candidate information pack you will find further information on our search for a new Chair to lead the Board, together with details on the application process with Moon Executive Search.

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### A Message from our current Chair

I am delighted that you are interested in becoming the new Chair of Designability.

We are at an exciting time in our development – we recently celebrated 50 years of designing and making products for disabled people. We appointed a new Chief Executive in 2019 and she and our Board of Trustees have created a new strategy, putting the focus firmly on expanding our range of products to help more disabled people to live with greater independence.

We are now seeking a new Chair who will lead the Board in setting and delivering Designability's strategic objectives. The Chair will champion our vision, mission and values and, with the support of the Executive team and other Trustees, will ensure we fulfil our ambitions.

We are a national charity and welcome candidates from across the country, with meetings taking place virtually and at our headquarters in Bath.

Our Chair needs to share a passion and commitment, as well as have the time available, to help disabled people to enjoy independence through the design and provision of life-changing products. If you would like to join us, please get in touch.

Thanks again for your interest in Designability

**Libby Gawith**  
Chair

### A Message from our Chief Executive



I am looking forward to helping Designability's next Chair lead our charity to grow and achieve change.

We have big ambitions – we know that the needs of disabled people are not well served and there are gaps in provision we can fill. We want to provide products and services which give disabled people what they want, not just what they need, to ensure they can live the life they choose.

With funding in place, and a strong talented team of staff, we have the potential to grow and help many more disabled people. I am looking forward to working in partnership with our new Chair to achieve this potential.

**Catharine Brown**  
CEO

## About Designability

Designability is a UK charity that enables disabled people to live with greater independence. Our team of designers and engineers create life-changing assistive products to help people who are facing challenges every day.

We want products and technology to be more accessible to everyone. Our team follow the principles of human-centred design which means that everything we develop is done in response to what people tell us they need. Our aim is for people to achieve greater independence and happiness in their lives – goals that benefit all of society.

Our most well-known product is the Wizzybug, a powered wheelchair which we designed especially to provide very young children with independence, freedom of movement and fun. We provide them to families across the UK through our award-winning loan scheme which means that children can have one for as long as needed completely free of charge.

Our team have designed and developed a wide variety of products over the years, including technology which benefits people living with dementia, as well as a range of adapted products for children and adults with restricted growth. Some of our most popular creations solve typical day-to-day challenges, such as our bottom wiper which gives people greater dignity and independence in their personal hygiene.



We are a local charity with a surprisingly broad reach. Disabled people use our products around the world; across the UK (as far north as the Shetland Islands) and internationally, in countries including France, Norway, Israel and Australia.

Our turnover is around £2million a year, our team numbers 26 staff and we have recently completed a strategic review which sets objectives under three areas of work: insight and engagement; product development; provision of products and services.

## Our Strategy and Values

**Vision** Our vision is a future where every person with a disability has the products they want, to live the life they choose.

**Mission** We will create and provide products which enable people with disabilities to live with greater independence.

**Values** The values we hold as an organisation when delivering our work are:

**Creative** We aim to be innovative, inspiring, dynamic, imaginative yet simple

**Inclusive** We aim to be honest, open, welcoming, listening, friendly, informed

**Practical** We aim to be pragmatic, down to earth, evidenced, direct, professional, have a can-do attitude and deliver on our promises



In the next three years, our work will focus on:

- **Product development**, directly through our own products and indirectly by advising others
- Helping adults and children who have primarily **physical disabilities**
- Providing solutions for disabled people's **mobility challenges** in our new product development

Helping disabled people overcome challenges:

- We will be a charity known nationally for a vibrant programme of new and established products created in partnership with the people they are intended for
- We will work with nationally recognised leaders in disability and design across public life, academia and business

This new strategy has been created to ensure that we deliver the greatest impact we can and are effective in helping disabled people with the challenges they face and the opportunities they meet in their day to day lives

Read the full 2020-23 Strategy document [here](#).



### **Board of Trustees and Staff Team**

Details of the current members of the Board of Trustees can be found on our website using the link below

<https://designability.org.uk/our-organisation/our-trustees/>

There is also information about the staff team available using this link

<https://designability.org.uk/about-us/our-team/>

## The Role

**Objective:** The Chair will lead the Board and CEO in setting and delivering Designability's strategic objectives. The Chair will champion our Vision Mission and Values, and with the support of the Executive Board and other Trustees will ensure the charity's goals are met.

**Leading the:** Board of Trustees

**Time Commitment:** Circa 3 days a month – this includes 4 Board meetings, an annual Away Day, committee meetings, strategic Board events, induction, reading and preparation for Board meetings, communication with the CEO and attendance at stakeholder events.

**Remuneration:** The role of Chair is unremunerated, although travel and other legitimate expenses may be claimed.

### Responsibilities:

- To lead the Trustees of Designability and to ensure that the Board fulfils its governance responsibilities
- To direct the work of the Board to ensure Designability achieves its aims and responds effectively to issues that arise
- To ensure the Trustees deploy Designability's resources to further the charity's objectives whilst complying with the law and meeting commitments to funders
- To ensure the three-year strategic plan is reviewed annually
- To chair and facilitate the Board meetings of Designability
- To set the agenda of Board meetings in conjunction with the CEO
- To lead on the monitoring and implementation of decisions taken at Board meetings or to allocate this role.
- To carry out an annual appraisal of the work of the CEO
- To sit on appointment and disciplinary panels as appropriate
- To represent Designability at functions and meetings with a variety of stakeholders and be an ambassador for the charity

In addition to the duties listed above, our new Chair should use any specific skills, knowledge or experience they have to help the Board of Trustees reach sound decisions.

This may involve leading discussions, identifying key issues, providing advice and guidance on new initiatives, and evaluating or offering advice on other areas in which the Trustee has particular expertise.

## Person Specification

### Knowledge and experience

- Experience of operating at a senior level (ideally executive and non-executive)
- Knowledge of and affinity with the work of Designability
- An empathy and understanding of the challenges faced by disabled people, ideally by having lived experience either personally, or as a family member or carer
- Non-executive or governance experience (ideally with experience of chairing boards or committees) with knowledge of good charity governance practice
- An understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship and a willingness to devote the necessary time to the role
- Experience of leading an organisation through a period of change, and in realising ambitious goals

### Skills and Abilities

- The ability to be an ambassador for the charity, and represent the organisation to funders, stakeholders, partners and the public, and network and build relationships for the charity
- The ability to steer a Board in identifying the key governance decisions to be made, ensuring well founded decision making
- Strategic thinking ability and able to stand back and see the big picture
- Financial/budgetary management skills and experience, and the ability to understand performance reports
- The ability to think creatively and challenge constructively
- The ability to probe facts, challenge assumptions and identify the advantages and disadvantages of proposals
- The ability to work as part of a team and ensure productive relationships with and among individual trustees
- The ability to create a mutually supportive relationship with the CEO
- A high level of written and oral communication skills

### Behaviours

- Independent judgement and willingness to speak their mind
- High level of personal integrity and honesty, acting openly, fairly and impartially at all times
- Collaborative, non-judgemental, and with the ability to relate with people of all backgrounds and experience
- Commitment to Designability's vision, mission and values, taking the time to understand the work of the organisation
- A sense of joint responsibility for the organisation's successes and failures
- Self-aware, with the ability to evaluate own performance and identify strengths and weaknesses
- Champion diversity equality and inclusion and committed to respect confidential information about individuals
- Able to meet the Charity Commission's eligibility requirements for being a trustee. This post will be subject to a Disclosure and Barring Service check.

## The Recruitment Process

Moon Executive Search has been appointed as Search Partner to Designability and will manage the recruitment process.

**Please note that all direct applications will be forwarded to Moon Executive Search.**

Initial assessment by Moon Executive Search. Candidates will also be able to discuss the role with the current Chair before applying.

Shortlisted candidates will meet the recruitment panel for interview, and trustees and senior staff for an informal Q&A session. These may be virtual or at our premises in Bath dependent upon covid restrictions in place at the time.

The timetable is as follows:

Informal discussions with current Chair	July/August 2021
Closing date for applications	August 31 <sup>st</sup> 2021 midnight
Informal discussion with CEO	w/c September 13 <sup>th</sup> 2021
Interviews	w/c September 20 <sup>th</sup> 2021
Informal discussion with trustees and senior staff	w/c September 20 <sup>th</sup> 2021
Appointment	October 2021
Attend board meeting	October 11 <sup>th</sup> 2021 6pm – 8pm
Formal appointment at AGM/Away Day	November 8 <sup>th</sup> 2021 (full day)

### How to apply

If you are interested in applying for the position, please submit by email your CV or biography together with an expression of interest, explaining your motivations for applying for the role and any relevant information supporting your application.

If you would like an informal discussion regarding the role on offer, please contact Sandy Hinks, Head of Charity Practice on 01275 371 200 or email [recruit@moonexecsearch.com](mailto:recruit@moonexecsearch.com)

The current Chair is available for informal discussions during July and August 2021 which can be arranged through Moon Executive Search.

Completed Applications with CV's and EOI should quote reference: JO2158 and be sent by email to: [recruit@moonexecsearch.com](mailto:recruit@moonexecsearch.com)

**[Closing Date for applications is midnight August 31<sup>st</sup> 2021](#)**

Designability is committed to creating and sustaining a fully inclusive and diverse culture. We welcome applicants from all backgrounds and communities.

## Further information

Further information can be found:

- Designability <https://designability.org.uk/>
- Charity Commission Information: Designability – Charity number 256335.
- Charity Commission Guides to being a Trustee: Please read section 3 – ‘Who can be a Trustee’, if for any reason you feel that you do not meet the criteria or have any concerns relating to this matter please do let us know in confidence. Two references will be taken by the charity on verbal offer of the roles.  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/866947/CC3\\_feb20.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/866947/CC3_feb20.pdf)
- Moon Executive Search Guides to being a Trustee: These can help in preparing your application:  
<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/59dc9dbb90badec5d237c43a/t/5ca466dee5e5f0302a3360db/1554278110848/Top+Tips+Becoming+a+Trustee.pdf>



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