

SMALLWOODTRUST

Enabling women to be financially resilient

Board Shadowing Programme

Use your lived experience to help end gendered poverty



What is it?

The Board shadowing programme aims to open doors for women working at grassroots community level and help demystify the roles of trustees and boards, especially within grant-making and funding organisations.

The programme is part of our commitment to explore new ways to help bring diversity, equity and inclusion into all of the Smallwood Trust's work and to support our goal of ending gendered poverty.

As a national funder, we aim to open up space on our Board to give valuable insights for women with lived experience, into what being a Board member/trustee entails and to help give participants new skills, exposure and know-how in a safe environment.

The programme is led by one of our Board members, Ambreen Shah, and supported by the CEO Paul Carbury.



More information on the leadership of the Smallwood Trust [here](#)

Who are the Smallwood Trust?

The Smallwood Trust has been helping women across the UK out of poverty for 135 years. Our programmes provide grant funding and support to enable women to become financially resilient and to ensure economic systems work for them rather than against them.

Half of the UK population are female – therefore our approach not only matters for individual women, enabling them to thrive economically and overcome financially stressful events, it is also critical for the UK economy.

While we will continue to meet the immediate needs of women facing financial insecurity, we will also increasingly focus on tackling the systems that cause gendered poverty.



More information can be found at www.smallwoodtrust.org.uk

What's involved?

The key elements and opportunities for shadowees on the programme include:

- Attendance at Board meetings, sub-committees and Grants Panel meetings to find out more about the role of trustees and what they do and are accountable for
- Space on the Board agenda for shadowees to speak or ask questions (should they wish to)
- Pre-meetings and de-briefings with Lead Board member and CEO before and after each meeting
- Optional monthly-check-ins with Lead Board member for support and discussion of personal development opportunities
- Opportunities to learn about the work of the Smallwood Trust including grant-making processes and visiting funded organisations (in person or remotely)
- Optional attendance at networking sessions, events, workshops, webinars and other training opportunities and reporting back to the Board on any findings
- Access to personal development budget of £500
- Fee for those with lived experience for attendance and contribution at workshops, events and meetings (our current lived expertise fee is £300 per day)



Who can apply?

We are looking to select 3-4 individuals with lived experience of gendered poverty who have an interest in the work of the Smallwood Trust, and who would like to use the opportunity to further their own personal and/or professional development.

We want applicants from a broad range of diverse backgrounds with a cross section of skills, experiences, and narratives. The make-up of UK trust and foundation boards does not represent the diversity of our society – far from it. We know that many applicants face multiple barriers for all sorts of reasons and we recognise that you are even more likely to have faced barriers, in our sector and others, if one or more of the following represent you:

- **You have lived experience of the criminal justice system**
- **You are Black, Asian or racially minoritised**
- **You don't have socio-economic privilege, and/or you identify as working class**
- **You identify as D/deaf or disabled or both**

Therefore we warmly welcome all applications.

No formal qualifications are required nor any prior experience of a Board or trustee role. You may be employed, unemployed, volunteering or anything else! We aim to have as few restrictions and barriers as possible. You may work for or volunteer for a local women's organisation, social enterprise or other charity.

You will be passionate and determined about tackling gendered poverty and be enthusiastic about how you can use this experience to develop your skills and networks.

Individuals that are selected will be part of a cohort who will go through the programme and learn together.



What did last year's participants think?

The first Shadowing Programme ran from April 2021 to April 2022. Three shadowees were recruited and here is a snapshot of their experiences:



Ciiku Sondergaard

“ By being included in this process, I feel more confident about bringing my own experience, my lived experience and my work experience to another organisation. ”

Shana Begum

“ The experience has been amazing for my confidence and it's been so valuable to see how an organisation like Smallwood works behind closed doors and makes decisions. ”



Saira Shahzadi

“ It's not an exaggeration to say it was life-changing. It has been a great learning experience and it was good to meet the other Board members and learn how they use their different knowledge and perspectives to help make collective decisions. ”



- An evaluation of the first year of the programme, by independent consultant Anj Handu, can be read [here](#)
- Further reflections from last year's participants can be found [here](#)

Time commitment

There are four Smallwood Board meetings per year which usually run for 2.5 hours.

There are usually 2-3 other sub-committee / panel meetings each year which run for around 1.5 hours.

Monthly catch-ups and briefings (optional) would usually last for one hour.

We are aiming to invite selected shadowees to the annual Board away day on the 19th October 2022, which is currently scheduled for 10am to 2.30pm and will likely take place in London or Birmingham. Final details are to be confirmed.

The majority of meetings take place on Zoom but 1-2 Board meetings each year are in person.

Recruitment schedule

Advert	>	W/c 29th August
Application deadline	>	Sunday 18th September
Shortlisting / invite to interview	>	W/c 19th September
Interviews	>	W/c 26th September



- The 2022/23 programme will run from **October 2022 to September 2023.**
- The first Board meeting that selected shadowees will be invited to is currently scheduled for **Wednesday 19th October 2022, 10am to 2.30pm.**
- Prior to the 19th October meeting, there will be an opportunity to have a welcome meeting with Smallwood Board Member, Ambreen Shah, and CEO Paul Carbury.

How to apply

If you are interested in this opportunity, you can apply by:



1

Completing the **short application form**

OR



2

You can submit a **short video answering the questions on the application form (that can be recorded on your smartphone)**

If you would like to submit a short video you can do this in a number of different ways:

- Send it to the following **Whatsapp number: 07875525699**
- Email it to: **paulcarbury@smallwoodtrust.org.uk**
- If your file is too large to send by Whatsapp or email you can **create a free account with WeTransfer at www.wetransfer.com**. You will need to upload your video to WeTransfer and then email it through them to **paulcarbury@smallwoodtrust.org.uk**. They have step by step instructions on how to do this once you upload your video.

To help us improve and review our processes please also complete the **equal opportunities monitoring form here**.

We don't want the application process to be a barrier so if you have any questions or need help with the form please email **paulcarbury@smallwoodtrust.org.uk**



The deadline for applications is midnight on Sunday 18th September.

Ambreen and Paul would also be happy to talk to anyone in advance who might be interested, please email **paulcarbury@smallwoodtrust.org.uk** in the first instance.

We will also accept nominations from organisations who may have someone in mind who they think would benefit from the programme – please speak to the nominee to ask their agreement before submitting an application on their behalf.



“ Smallwood awards grants to support women who are living in poverty, suffer mental ill health, are in abusive relationships, are digitally excluded or all of the above (and this list is far from exhaustive).

I think if you have personally been affected by these issues you will bring a perspective to decision making that others, who have not, just cannot; but I am also aware that the opportunity, confidence and headspace to be a trustee can be really limited.

The first year of the programme has demonstrated that by opening doors and exposing what goes on round the Board table and making these seemingly ‘not for me’ spaces more accessible, we can change the lack of current diversity in the governance space. ”

Dr Ambreen Shah,
Board member, Smallwood Trust





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Our Royal Patron: Her Majesty The Queen



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